

4. 11. 21

FAMILY SERMONS.



BY THE

REV. E. W. WHITAKER,

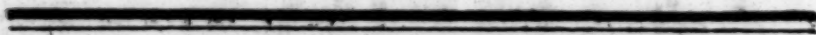
LATE OF CHRIST CHURCH, OXFORD:

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VOL. I.

“FEED MY SHEEP”



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PREFACE.

SINCE the extensive consideration which is in the following Discourses bestowed on the evidence of religion, may, to some readers, appear unnecessary to be entered into before the circles for whose use the work is intended, the authour thinks it incumbent on him, to state his reason for having been so diffuse on this subject. The propagators of infidelity have lately, in a manner even unprecedented in the annals of iniquity, made their attacks on the truth in tracts, purposely written for the perusal of the least informed of those who can read, and taken abundant pains to disperse them not only among servants, but even in schools,

that the poison of them may be injected into the infant mind, while yet unprepared to resist it.

To counteract this mode of attack, no measure appeared so proper as that of arming those who are exposed to it, with that settled conviction of the truth of what they have been taught to believe, which can be raised only by such demonstration as may be intelligible to unimproved and tender minds. On proof of this kind, therefore, the authour has so largely dwelt, and stated, with all the perspicuity he was able, the grounds of faith, from the dawn of the religious principle in the human mind, to that demonstration of the Spirit given in the miraculous gifts exercised by the first preachers of the Gospel. Still the attentive reader will perceive, that whether the evidence or the doctrines of religion be treated of, or not, the

PREFACE.

the necessary connection between faith and practice, is never lost sight of; and it is intended, that in the volumes which will contain the subsequent parts of the course, the latter of these shall be most amply discussed.

The evils under which so large a part of Christendom now groans, would scarcely be misnamed, were we to call them, in a considerable degree, the natural penalties of that neglect of duty, against which the holy Scriptures denounce the heaviest woes, the omission of that instruction to those under our care, of which the want may cause them to transgress. For how have the attempts of some, to destroy all subordination, and subvert society, met with success so rapid, in exciting subjects against their sovereigns, servants against their masters, and children against their parents, but

through the ignorance of their duty, and forgetfulness of all moral obligations, into which these inferiour classes have been permitted to sink? Yet, severe as are the sufferings now undergone, they can, by christians, be considered but as pledges of still severer, which must, in a future state, await the guilty, who will not receive the correction at present sent them, and as forming an earnest call on all who have not yet renounced the faith, to recollect the duty of imparting to their households, what religious instruction they can give. To assist them in what is thus at all times their duty, but at present a duty, to the practice of which they are summoned in a tone so impressive, is the object of the following work: in recommendation of which, the authour has only to add, that if it be read and heard with the same degree of sincerity with which it is written, how many defects
soever

PREFACE.

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foever a critical eye may discover in it, the composition (through the divine mercy) will not fail of producing a most beneficial effect on those who shall become acquainted with its contents.

He cannot, however, close this short Preface, without taking the opportunity of publickly returning his sincere thanks to those few, those very few, who have honoured him with their subscriptions to a work little calculated to attract attention, in an age in which faith is rapidly disappearing from the earth.

N. B. A List of the SUBSCRIBERS will be printed at the End of the Third Volume.

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- 11, l. 14, remove the comma from after *effectually*, to
after *it*.
- 14, l. 16, for *the* read *a*.
- 24, l. 11, expunge the comma at the end.
- Ibid. l. 23, for *or* read *of*.
- 34, l. 6, for the , after applications put ;
- 47, l. 15, at the end place ;
- 52, l. 2, insert *of* after proofs, and read *afforded for
affords*.
- 56, l. 21, for *shrub* read *tree*.
- 69, l. 23, for *it* read *its*, and for *first*, *most* read *material*.
- Ibid. l. 24, expunge *a*, and for *storm* read *storms*.
- 97, l. 14, for *Himself* read *His self*.
- 98, l. 24, for *claims*, *claim*.
- 100, l. 14, for *horror*, *horreur*.
- 119, l. 6, for *Himself*, *His self*.
- 133, l. 18, for *transgressors*, *transgressours*.
- 160, l. 17, for *themselves*, *their selves*.
- 163, l. 3, after *too* insert ?
- 178, l. 19, for *this*, *bis*.
- 183, l. 3, after *forward*, insert *their*.
- 205, l. 20, after *charity* expunge the comma.
- 210, l. 7, for *submitted*, *committed*.
- 222, l. 13, expunge the comma after *this*.
- 233, l. 22, expunge the comma after *Lord*.
- 249, l. 8, remove the comma after *observe* to after *passing*.
- 251, l. 13, expunge the comma after *nature*.
- Ibid. l. 16, expunge the comma after *inference*.
- 264, l. 7, for . put ; at the end.
- 272, line the last, for *awfulness*, *awefulness*.
- 276, l. 11, for *awful*, *aweful*.
- 294, l. 9, for . after *are* put ,
- Ibid. l. 11, for , after *much*, put .
- 306, l. 15, for *promises*, *premisses*.
- 329, l. 8, after *their* insert a comma, and the same in the
next line after *sensible*.
- 334, l. 9, put , instead of the :
- 335, line the last, expunge *not*.
- 337, l. 14, after *truth* insert ,
- 338, l. 19, for *end* read *band*.
- 351, l. 10, for the comma after *delivered* put :
- 358, l. 9, put the comma after *efficacy* after *connected*.
- 373, l. 16, for *practise*, read *practice*.
- 374, l. 10, for *desertions*, read *desertion*.

SERMON I.

ON FAITH AS THE GROUND OF ALL
RELIGION.

HEB. XI. 6.

But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

THE first dawn of religious principle in SERM.
the human mind appears under the I.
general form of a fear of some invisible
being; and although the conviction thus
manifesting itself of the existence of some-
thing not seen, cannot proceed from experi-
ence, yet it is confirmed by it; and the ob-
servations of the wise and learned on the
frame and constitution of the world, on the
VOL. I. B use,

SERM. use, order, and beauty of its several parts,
I. on the events recorded in the history of
mankind, as well as on what are called the
accidents of life, tend to prove, while revelation hath fully confirmed the reality of a just object of this natural dread; the existence I mean, of a Being who made and governs all things, but “whose voice no man hath heard, or seen his shape at any time.”

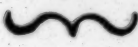
That the fear now mentioned naturally arises in our breasts, ye yourselves can testify; and ye are conscious, that on occasions of particular solitude and darkness, it is sometimes even difficult to restrain it so far as to prevent its producing uneasiness. Now from its thus naturally attending us, we may presume by reasoning from every other instance of principles and faculties with which we find ourselves endowed, that by being properly applied, and duly cultivated, it may be rendered considerably beneficial to us; while on the other hand, we do in fact see most miserable effects flowing from a mis-

misapplication and corruption of it. For SERM.
what are all those terrours, under which the I.
weak and the ignorant so often suffer, of
ghosts and apparitions, of unlucky signs and
evil omens, but the effects of this principle
degenerated into superstition *? whereas,
were men to consider, who it is they ought
to fear, they would at once discover the end
for which this feeling was originally im-
planted in our minds, and learning that
there is one great Being, eternal, immutable,
invisible, the only wise God, to whom all
other beings are subject, and without whose
permission they cannot act, they would, on
the one hand, be freed from the dread of any

* Since superstition does thus appear to be owing merely to a detorsion of the religious principle innate in man, (innate I mean truly, as much as any animal instinct is so, since this is demonstrated by fact) the very existence of it proves that of the principle itself; the recollection of which will enable us to wrest from the infidel one of his most favourite weapons: for all declamations against what men may be led to by superstition, which springs from the misapplication, can be of no avail against religion which arises from the proper use of the principle here shewn to be natural.

On Faith as the

SERM. imaginary powers, of any undeserved mis-

I.  fortunes ; and, on the other, by cultivating, not opposing nature, would proceed in a path easy to themselves ; and instead of causing the light that is in them to become darkness, or letting it continue so small in degree as only to lead them to mistake all the objects around them, they would be daily gaining an encrease of it, until “ God himself, who at first commanded the light to shine out of darkness, shall shine in their hearts, and give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the person of Jesus Christ.”

I have thus stated to you at some length, that religion is absolutely necessary to man, with the purpose of bespeaking your sincere attention to that series of discourses, which I mean to read to you, as occasion will permit, that being convinced it is a subject in which ye are most materially interested, since on the improvement ye really make in the knowledge and practice of it, your own happiness does in truth depend, ye may be

Ground of all Religion.

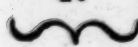
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earnest in your endeavours to take full ad-
vantage of the opportunity ye will thus have
of becoming acquainted with the principles,
the doctrines and the laws of true religion :
whence ye will learn not to mispend your
time in a fruitless search after happiness in
this world, where ye can never find it, but
to live so as to secure to yourselves the favour
of God, who will give you in the next life
unutterable blessings, that shall never be
taken from you. Yet, as neither God His
self, nor the good things he hath prepared
for those who love him, are objects of any
of our senses, and therefore we cannot have
the testimony of either our ears or our eyes
for their reality. If we would please Him,
or gain them, we must begin to act upon
faith ; that is, from a belief of his existence,
and of his intention to reward those who
diligently seek him. And this being the
first improvement of that principle I have
pointed out to you as planted in our breasts
by the hand of our Creatour, it should seem
moreover, on this account likewise, impos-
sible to please God without it ; for when He

SERM.

I.

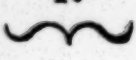
SERM. hath endowed intelligent creatures with

I.  principles capable of improvement, and furnished them too with means of improving them, can we think, that He will be pleased with those who neglect both? if not, then besides that bar to pleasing God, which the apostle in the text mentions as arising from want of faith as a motive to action, and which springs on the side of man, there is another occasioned by the offence which must arise in the mind of a Being too pure not to disapprove of any iniquity, on seeing his creatures transgress the plainest lines of duty, and infringe the most weighty obligations. Now both these may be considered as belonging to the subject of the present discourse; and I shall accordingly review them more accurately in their order, endeavouring to prove at large to you, first, “that all service of God, all religious conduct, must proceed from faith in him:” and, secondly, “that wherever that faith is wanting, his approbation must be withhelden.”

“ He

Ground of all Religion.

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“ He that cometh to God,” saith the SERM.
apostle, “ must believe that He is.” The ^{I.} 
meaning of the phrase “ cometh to God,”
will be most completely ascertained by ad-
verting to another phrase of the sacred
writings, that of “ walking with God;”
for since we know that this is used of those
good men who lived in steady obedience to
the divine laws, looking up to God for pro-
tection from their enemies of every kind, so
may we assuredly conclude, that “ to come
to God” is intended to express our beginning
to enter on this course; when a man fully
resolves, and delays not to put in practice
his determination to live in the fear and love
of God, shaping his whole conduct by the
commandments of the Lord, and depending
on Him alone for success and happiness.
Let me arrest your attention here then for a
moment, to observe, that it not only is
manifest, that no man would enter into a
resolution to deny himself every indulgence
inconsistent with God’s laws, from any mo-
tive less cogent than a firm persuasion, that
the Being whose laws they are said to be,

SERM. does really exist, and attend to the conduct
 I. of the sons of men, that He may recompense
 them according to it; but that it is clear
 too, that under many temptations which
 arise to draw men aside from the strait line
 of duty, and against many crosses which
 they meet to thwart them in it, a strong
 conviction of this kind is absolutely neces-
 sary, to keep them from deviating, and to
 encourage them against whatever might
 drive them from the path they had deter-
 mined to follow. "No man having put
 his hand to the plough," saith our blessed
 Lord, "and looking back, is rightly dis-
 posed * for the kingdom of God." But
 what can prevail with a man to relinquish
 things present with him, and bid a final
 farewell to pleasures to which he is accus-
 tomed, under the hope of gaining something
 better hereafter, but a full assurance that that
 superiour happiness is attainable? On any
 other ground it would be unreasonable; it
 would be unjust in the preachers to call us

* Εὐθετος.

to seek the kingdom of heaven before all SERM.
things : and therefore in their preaching I.
their first object has been, and must be, to
plant this full assurance in breasts where it
existeth not, and call it forth into action
where it does : and, consistently with this
observation, we find the sacred writers ever
insisting upon faith as the first requisite in
those who would embrace the gospel of the
kingdom of heaven. It was this which
rendered the subjects of the miracles of our
blessed Lord, and his apostles, *capable* of
being healed : it is this with which all the
attacks of our bitter and crafty adversary
the devil are to be repelled ; and it is by this
that we must overcome the world. To
raise this in their breasts, the apostles and
their fellow-labourers in the gospel, re-
minded the Gentiles of the “ witness which
God bears to himself in doing good, giving
men rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons,
filling our hearts with food and gladness :
and that he is the Lord of both heaven and
earth, having made the world, and all things
therein.” For the same end they recalled
to

SERM. to the recollection of the Jews what he had
I. done for their forefathers; how he performed the promises which he made them; and how he gave them deliverance by means the most unexpected, by instruments the least honoured: and to produce a conviction of the truth of the doctrines which they themselves were sent more particularly to preach, that Jesus of Nazareth was the Christ, and that God had appointed a day in which he will judge the world by him; they urged their Master's resurrection from the dead: and that the belief they required of this might not rest merely on the words of men, they exercised the miraculous gifts with which they were endowed, in doing such things as no man could do unless God were with him.

Now those who, considering that the works of the first preachers of christianity not only were far beyond the reach of human power, but moreover done expressly in the name of God, and appealed to as testimony of his commission, concluded, that

that he would not have permitted such SERM.
miracles to have been done in his name I.
to the deception of thousands, who were
ready to obey his will at the expence of
every thing dear unto them ; but would
have provided means for detecting the fraud,
had the preachers falsely pretended to autho-
rity from him, did set to their seal, that
God “ is true ;” and manifested a belief
that he will not forsake those who diligently
seek him : and as far as we contemplate the
ground of faith on which those who have
gone before us thus acted, we shall gain
assurance of the truth of it effectually, to en-
courage us in a conduct resembling theirs.
Reflection on the works of creation, and
the acts of Providence, those things of God
which are seen, will convince us of the
reality of those which are not seen, even his
eternal power and godhead. The contem-
plation of the wonders which He wrought
for his chosen people, the family of Israel,
and of the signs which through them He
has given unto mankind, will assure us,
that the very same Being, who made and
governs

SERM. governs the world, hath also framed a dispensation for preserving the knowledge of himself among men, and preventing their universally giving the honour due unto him alone; to those who are no gods, and the consideration of the testimony born to the truth of the Gospel, by the miracles of our blessed Lord, and by the gifts of the Holy Spirit bestowed on his first disciples, will satisfy us that the Christian doctrine is indeed from God. And if, on the other hand, we continue ignorant, or unbelieving as to any of these points, the fault must be all our own; since it arises from a want of that serious, earnest, and impartial attention, which we are bound by so many obligations to use in discovering whether any thing we are called to receive as the declared will of our Creatour, be in truth such or not.

The calls, therefore, which we meet with in the Scriptures, to regard the works of the Lord, and the operations of his hands; the exhortations to attention which

which they contain, such as, " he that hath SERM.
ears to hear, let him hear." The admonitions I.
to fix our thoughts not on those things
which are seen, but on those which are not
seen, should be received as of the highest
importance. Indeed, on this first step in
our religious course, depends all our future
progress; while even those who have em-
braced the faith, and are sincere in pro-
fessing themselves Christians, will find, that
they are very inadequately provided for the
practice of that self-denial which the Gos-
pel requires, unless their faith be kept alive,
and their hopes of future recompence be
preserved unabated, by frequently calling
to mind the wonders of the Lord of old,
and meditating on those good things which
he hath prepared for those who love him.
For although in the exercise of some vir-
tues, encouragement may be derived from
the countenance of the world, and they are
attended with visible fruits, and immediate
reward, yet the practice of meekness, hu-
mility, and other branches of the great
Christian virtue, charity, often gains from
men

SERM. men only contempt and additional injuries ;
I. and therefore perseverance in it can rest
only on the hope of a recompence from
him, who sees not as man sees ; and since
that hope must be founded on the belief of
his being, and goodness, and power, to
whom it looks for its reward ; as impossible
as it is that a tree should grow without a
root, or a building stand without a founda-
tion, so impossible, naturally impossible I
mean, is it, that the practice of real righte-
ousness, should proceed but on religious
faith ; or that any one should come to God,
who does not believe “ that He is, and is
the rewarder of them that diligently seek
him.”

However sincere, therefore, ye may al-
ready be, in professing yourselves believers
in God and Christ ; however manifestly to
yourselves convinced of the justness of your
faith, and satisfied of the soundness of the
ground on which ye have embraced it,
think it not a needless task to which I call
you, in requesting your attention to a re-
view

view of the articles and foundation of it. **SERM.**

A small inroad made by the teachers of false doctrine on any part of it, which may first

I.

appear likely to produce no evil consequences, may at length prove of the most pernicious tendency; since the whole being supported by the same authority, he who relinquishes one part in defiance of that authority, may relinquish another without offending against any higher authority than that which he had before despised; while, if we shew a mistrust in our Creatour, let the point on which we do so be what it may, his approbation must be withholden from us: which was the second proposition on which I proposed to speak in this discourse, that I might prove more at large the impossibility of pleasing God without faith.

In the eyes of a Being, whose determinations are the decrees of justice itself, the ungrateful impiety which any creature betrays in mistrusting his goodness, and the blasphemous insult contained in a doubt of the power or wisdom of the Maker of the world,

SERM. world, cannot be acceptable. Again; We
1. rightly consider it as unjust to mistrust even
men without cause, how much more so
then must it be to withhold any portion
of confidence from perfection itself? View
the point in this light, and ye will readily
subscribe to the apostle's assertion, that
" whatsoever is not of faith is sin;" and
having once seen this, ye will be fully con-
vinced, that " without faith it is impossible
to please him who is of too pure eyes to
behold iniquity." What hope then of fa-
vour from him can remain to those who
treat any thing he has vouchsafed to reveal,
any thing he has been pleased to prescribe,
as of trifling importance, or of doubtful
obligation, as scarcely worth knowing, or
as not necessary to be obeyed? Would men
give some of their attention to this question,
we should at least be delivered from many
shallow remarks, and much common-place
declamation: it is certainly neither in the
divine truth, wisdom, nor goodness, that
men declare their faith, when they say that
such a doctrine, though made known to us
by

by God, is as to its reception of little consequence, that this commandment may be transgressed without much danger, and that duty neglected, and no great evil follow. For would perfect mercy lay *needless* restraints on us? or perfect wisdom employ its dictates on *trifles*? Not to notice at length (as not accurately belonging to the present subject, though generally suggested to us by it) the presumptuous absurdity of creatures, among whom not one of a thousand ever seriously reflects on his own nature, taking on themselves at once to decide, that the Authour of it cannot see that any conduct tends to their welfare, but what has its use immediately visible also to themselves.

This is not the behaviour we teach our children to practise towards us; on the contrary, we are wont to admonish them to confide in our instructions, until they have sufficient experience to judge for themselves. Shall we then refuse to place a similar confidence in the wisdom and kindness of our

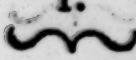
SERM. heavenly Father? Or rather should not, if
I. it were possible, our reliance on him be as
much superior to that, which we require to
be placed on us, as his eternal and perfect
attributes, are to our limited endowments?
And what would be the fruits of this just
faith if once entertained by us? Would
they not appear in the sincerest practice of
those virtues which the divine word enjoins,
whether in a ready submission to all the re-
straints of temperance, purity and content,
or in a firm and constant resistance of temp-
tations, or in the exercise of that active
benevolence by which we can do good to
our brethren, and make them glorify God,
when they perceive the faith of his servants
thus working by love? And if these fruits
be produced in us, shall we not at length
receive from the mercy of God the natural
reward of a just faith entertained according
to his will, the happiness and glory of
finding our confidence well grounded; when
he in whom we trust shall appear, and ac-
knowledging us no longer as servants,
but as friends, we shall see him as he is,
and

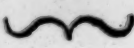
and our faith be swallowed up in know- SERM.
ledge?

I.

Thus then it appears that (in the words of St. Paul) “ the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and a good conscience, and faith unfeigned :” and thus it is manifest, that on yourselves it depends whether ye will cultivate that principle which at first barely suggests to you, that there is an invifible Being to whose power ye are fubject, fo as to improve it into true faith in your almighty Maker and heavenly Father ; even till ye come to the fulnefs of ftature in Chrift, and gaining through him the adoption of fons, no longer continue in the bondage of fear, but with joyful hope look forward to that inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, that fadeth not away, referved in the heavens for all who believe to the faving of the foul.

To prevail with you, therefore, as much as in me lies, not to neglect this great and everlaftingly beneficial work, I fhall endeavour

SERM. to set before you, in such method as will
 I.  conduce both to the easier apprehension, and
 better remembrance of the several particulars: first, the grounds of our faith, or
 reasons for believing what we, as Christians, profess to hold, as the truth; then, the objects of it, or the articles of our belief; after which will naturally come to be considered the practice to which such faith leads, or the laws of God, which we are bound to obey; and then the rewards of those who thus use their faculties, powers, and opportunities, as they ought, and the punishments of those who do not: and since these be such that no pains can be more than we should take in obtaining the former, and avoiding the latter, I shall, by the divine permission, and merciful support, proceed lastly to consider before you, the various directions, admonitions, and encouragements, pointed out to us in the sacred writings, to assist us in this our pursuit of happiness, and avoidance of misery in the life of the world to come: trusting that ye will not let me labour alone in this work,
 but

but with earnestness endeavour at that which **SERM.**
your own interest in it demands, to un- ^{I.}
derstand, retain, and reduce to practice, 
what I shall lay before you.

And may our God and Father, to whom all
our hearts are open, and Who now sees with
what degree of sincerity we are each of us
inclined to do our own part, influence your
minds to receive with sincerity, humility,
and integrity, the lessons which will thus
be read to you, taking from you all igno-
rance, hardness of heart, and contempt of
his word, and making you effectually to
keep ever in recollection the sentence of our
blessed Saviour, that “ whosoever shall not
receive the kingdom of God, as a little
child, he shall not enter therein !”

SERMON II.

ON THE PROOFS OF A DEITY AFFORDED BY
THE NATURE OF MAN.

ACTS XVII. 28.

*For in Him we live, and move, and have our
being.*

IN the discourse already read to you, the SERM.
II.
nature and absolute necessity of faith, as
a motive to the practice of religion, were
explained, and a proposal was made to en-
deavour to render it in you both rational and
strong, by proceeding to consider, in their
order, the grounds on which our belief of
the several articles of the Christian faith is
founded. For unless we can assign good
reasons for holding the truths we do, how-
ever unexceptionable they may be in them-
selves,

SERM. selves, we still justly lie under the censure
II. frequently cast on us by our adversaries, of
believing we know not why. Neither when
sufferings are to be undergone, rather than
deny God or Christ, if the question be
suggested to us, why we should submit to
the afflictions? is it likely that we should
continue resolute to support all with which
we are threatened, unless, on reflection, we
find that we have most convincing argu-
ments for the faith, on account of which,
persecution hangs over our heads: and, at
best, those who blindly believe without
considering, whether there be a reason for
the faith they embrace, scarcely offer any
thing better than the sacrifice of fools; since
with this conduct they are fully as liable to
be made to believe a lie, as to be converted
to the profession of the truth. And there-
fore we may presume it is, that the sacred
writers charge those, who receive not the
doctrines of the Scriptures, with criminal-
ity, on the mere ground of their not at-
tending to evidence sufficient to prove the
truth of the things preached unto them.
Thus

Thus too our blessed Saviour His self of the generation who refused to acknowledge him as the Christ the Son of God ; “ if I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin.” And both he and his apostles urged the Jews to examine the Scriptures, and see whether they, in fact, did bear that testimony to the Gospel, which they asserted, or not.

Now apply these things to our own case, and ye will perceive, that they both manifest, that mere credulity, and a confidence without testimony, are not required of us ; and at the same time teach us the real criminality of not attending to such evidence as God hath been pleased to give of Himself, and of his will to the world. Of those who absolutely rejected this evidence, our Lord spake, as hating both himself and his Father : but what material difference is there between absolutely rejecting testimony, and wilfully omitting to consider whether it be good or not ? Plain ~~it~~ is, that he

SERM. he who does not discern the truth, because

II. he will not pay that attention which is necessary for comprehending it, has nobody but himself to blame for his continuing in ignorance; and whatever advantages he may forfeit, or whatever errors he may fall into, through want of that knowledge which he might have acquired, if he would, may be justly charged to his account. Let this reflection then so influence you, that ye may readily listen to, and duly think on the grounds of our most holy faith, which I shall hereafter set before you; that ye may lose none of those blessings which may be obtained by having, nor fall into any of those faults of which ye may be guilty, through want of the most complete conviction of the truth of every doctrine of the Scriptures, and the fullest confidence in the perfection of God, and his universal providence.

The present state of the world, when infidelity is so prevalent, that faith seems to be very rapidly leaving the earth, and the
love

love of so many groweth cold, that less SERM,
countenance is daily given to the sincere II.
Christian, particularly calls on us to look
out for supports by which our task may be
rendered no more difficult than that of those
who went before us ; and such we can find,
only by reviewing all those arguments to
which experience has added strength, and
on which the encrease of human knowledge
hath thrown additional light.

I shall now, therefore, proceed to investigate before you, the evidence of natural religion, previous to the consideration of the testimony borne either to the revelation given by Moses, or to that which our blessed Lord His self delivered ; and in doing this, the method which will best conduce to an easy comprehension of the subject, will be that of examining first the internal proofs (internal with respect to ourselves I mean) of the being of God, those which arise from the existence and nature of man ; then the arguments for the same, which the natural

SERM. tural world supplies ; and, lastly, those
II. which may be drawn from the history of
the human race.

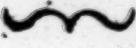
The arguments of the first of the kinds I have thus enumerated, are briefly contained in the words of the text, which are taken from a discourse, addressed by the great apostle of the Gentiles, St. Paul, to the people of Athens, in which he tells them, that that unknown God, of whose power and goodness they had seen some acts which they could not ascribe to any of the numerous idols, and fancied deities, with whose temples their city was crouded, and to whom they had therefore reared an altar, was the only true God ; who had made of one blood all the nations of the earth ; and who, instead of affording men any excuse for ignorance of Him, by being a God not at hand, but afar off, is in truth not far from every one of us ; “ for in him we live, and move, and have our being.” In which last words that great and inspired preacher plainly intimates,

mates, that the life and powers we possess, SERM.
yield a proof of the existence and constant II.
superintendence of our divine Creatour.

Let us discover then, if we can, the particulars in which this proof consists: some of them, at least, we may hope to descry; and the knowledge of these may, perhaps, clear the way to a future discovery of the rest.

Now, as we cannot give life unto ourselves, so we know from experience, that it is not in our power to retain it beyond the time allotted for our continuance in the body. This too, was the case of our parents, and likewise of theirs, and so of the generations before them, even to the first pair in whom the human race began. For how far backward soever we might, before reference had to the instruction revelation affords, presume the line of mankind to extend, yet somewhere or other we must, at last, acknowledge a generation, which either existed from eternity, having had no begin-

SERM. beginning to their lives, (which is a suppo-

II.  sition manifestly inconsistent with what we know of the nature of man) or were brought into existence by some superiour being; so that as this last is, of the two, the only admissibile position, *our existence necessarily implies that of our Maker; and our very living does in itself prove, that by Him we live.*

At the same time too, the want of power we experience to preserve ourselves from death, and the promiscuous manner in which men are seized on by it, at all seasons, and under all circumstances; young, old, and middle-aged; by sudden stroke, lingering disorders, or rapid disease; frequently taken away, when they have every common reason to hope, that they shall live; and often recovering from sickness, after they have given over all expectations of a return to health. These things, I say, demonstrate that our Maker has not delegated to us the disposal of our lives; and that being thus kept dependent on him for their continu-

ance,

ance, we thus too *live by Him*, manifesting SERM.
his power, and therefore necessarily his II.
existence, by our visible dependence on Him
for the preservation of our own.

Having made this first step in our deduction, that since we are neither self-originated, nor independent, there must be some being greater than ourselves who called us into existence, and to whose will we are subject, our farther progress becomes more easy, and by the light we have thus gained, we are enabled satisfactorily to account for that wonderful manner in which we subsist, with knowledge so confined, and powers so limited. So short-sighted are we, as frequently to wish we could order circumstances to take place in a manner which the event afterwards proves, instead of forwarding, would entirely have prevented the consummation which we earnestly desired; greater power, therefore, in our hands, would be like a weapon in those of a child, furnished only to do mischief to himself and others. Or, could we foresee occurrences,

SERM. rences, with the small portion of power we

II. have to avoid those which are evil, we
should not only lie under perpetual dread of approaching afflictions, but through our ineffectual endeavours to shun them, add much to our own sufferings, and do no less damage to those around us.

The mention of this may, perhaps, raise in your minds an imagination, that yet, if we could discern, that at the end of all the changes in this life, happiness alone awaits us at the last; this prospect would give us fortitude to meet with calmness all the intermediate ills; and by that mean both lessen the weight of those necessary to be undergone, and enable us to avoid others. This thought seems, indeed, highly reasonable; but then the object of it is no other than what ye already possess. Ye know, that if ye conduct yourselves well here, an everlasting rest is prepared for you hereafter; and that knowing more than this might not overwhelm, instead of strengthening our spirits,
we

we can by no mean determine; while it SERM.
would, undoubtedly, render us careless. II.
Our knowledge and our powers are, there-
fore, mutually proportionate to each other;
and the extent of both is such, as to mani-
fest, that we could not subsist even from
hour to hour without the support of one
mightier than ourselves, under whom we
live, and by whom we move.

But if the limitation of our power thus
necessarily indicates a superiour Being, by
whose gift we subsist; on the other hand,
the extent of what we have, and the nature
of the principles and faculties we possess,
no less evidently prove, that we have re-
ceived them from a hand far transcending
all visible excellence. Let but your own
powers of life and motion be for a moment
the subjects of your reflection, consider
how every limb is obedient to your thoughts;
how wonderful is that power by which the
passions of the mind so affect the body, that
even the countenance will involuntarily ex-
press what the soul suffers; and when danger

SERM. seems near, the hands will so instantaneously
 **II.** obey her call to defence, as to leave scarcely
any perceptible time for reflection on the
evil which alarmed her. Let the most ad-
mirable faculty of thought itself be viewed
in all its various applications, mark how
by imagination we can figure to ourselves
objects which we never saw, and even beings
which never existed, enlarge, diminish,
change, and alter them as we please ; how,
by apprehension, we are enabled to under-
stand the meaning of others, receive their
ideas, and become acquainted with their
sentiments ; and that, by reflection, we can-
not only make present to our minds that
which is past, but, by comparing two truths
together, oftentimes discover a third with
which we were before unacquainted, and
thus encrease our knowledge merely from
the stores of our own minds.

If we advert to the noble discoveries, and
the beneficial improvements which men
have accomplished by these powers of the
human soul, we shall perceive, that to them
are

are owed the cultivation of the, arts and SERM.
sciences, and all the progress which most II.
nations have gone through, in their passage
from a savage state, to that of refined so-
ciety. If the ability of the artist then may
be judged of from his work, how unspeak-
ably great must He be, who hath implanted
such faculties in earthen vessels, and be-
stowed on us endowments so excellent, that
we cannot justly reflect on them without
astonishment! We sometimes meet with
specimens of human art, on which we
think we can scarcely bestow sufficient ad-
miration; yet how great is the distance both
in power and in dignity between the most
excellent works of man, and man himself.
What, therefore, even from the contempla-
tion of our own faculties, ought we to con-
clude concerning the perfection of our
Maker? Or, as the psalmist asks, "He
that planted the ear, shall He not hear? and
He that formed the eye, shall He not see?
He that teacheth man knowledge, shall not
He know?" So may we demand, Must not
He who made us intelligent beings, possess

SERM. a still higher degree of intelligence? He

II.

who gave us power to discover truth, have His self more perfect knowledge? and He who enables us to communicate our sentiments to others, have power to make His will known unto us? Further; since no being can communicate an excellence of which he is not master, our moral discernment, or knowledge of good and evil, our natural disapprobation of the latter, and esteem of the former, the distinction which we naturally make of men according to their characters, and that principle of benevolence which appears, no less naturally under the various forms of those tender sympathies that by their effects spread comfort through life, sweeten society, and endear men to each other, prove, that the Being who endued us with such principles, is not only an intelligent, but a moral Agent; whose dictates are the maxims of truth, and His suggestions the deeds of benevolence.

Another

Another testimony of our connection SERM.
with some invifible Being, who hath given II.
us an inward fenfe of our dependence in
Him, is the very remarkable faculty of
conscience, which bearing testimony to all
we do, fhews, by the impartiality of its
decifions, that it holds its office from the
grant of an higher hand than our own:
and in the breasts of all the human race
pointing to a future tribunal, as pofitively
declares, and as fatisfactorily proves, that
we are with wifdom and design formed by
a Being of fuperiour power and intelligence,
as the connected movements of a watch
fhew, that that is a work not made by
chance, but framed with deliberation, and
put together with fkill.

To the influence which this faculty has
on our behaviour, or our happinefs, inter-
rupting the latter in proportion as it fails to
reftrain us in the former, we can all bear
witness: and yourselves know, how often
it has prevented you from doing what would
have been wrong: and in the instances in

SERM. which ye would not listen to its warnings,
II. how troublesome its rebukes have since
proved ; how base it has represented your
conduct to be ; how it has threatened you
with detection on every accident, and
painted suspicion in every countenance.
Nay, at the present moment, on my only
mentioning its power, it again arraigns
you, and appears ready to pour in the light
upon those misdeeds which ye have hitherto
most carefully concealed.

How finely wrought then, in this respect,
is the constitution of the human mind ! and
how potent is the testimony it offers to both
the greatness, and the goodness of Him,
who hath so fearfully and wonderfully made
us ! How many crimes have been prevented,
how many defenceless persons have been pre-
served from impending mischiefs, through
the operation of this one principle ! How
many of the guilty have been brought to
repentance, how many souls saved from
final destruction hereafter, by the effect of
its reproaches here !

Similar

Similar observations might be made on **SERM.**
the various other feelings of our minds, as **II.**
fear and hope, desire and aversion, and the
like; since these all contribute to our pre-
servation or enjoyments: while a very small
number indeed of those who are benefited
by them entertain any idea of their inesti-
mable utility. By these we are not only
deterred from bad, and incited to good ac-
tions, but become more closely connected
in society, and more dependent on, and con-
sequently more favourably affected to each
other. The fineness of the cords with
which we are thus drawn together, bespeaks
the hand which formed us, to be as won-
derful in working, as the extensiveness of
their effects reaching to the whole race of
mankind, manifests His providence to be
unlimited. For can we not, each for him-
self, recollect occasions when our fears have
prevented us from continuing in pursuits,
that we are now convinced would have led
us into evils, of which we entertained not
the least suspicion when we were stopped
by terrors, which, while we yielded to
D 4 them,

SERM. them, we were perhaps inclined ourselves
II. to condemn, as not sufficiently grounded?

And can we not remember times, when Hope seemed to be the sole encouragement we had; but when too, unless we had been supported by that, we should for ever have lost advantages, which have since contributed in no inconsiderable measure to our welfare? The like may be said of the involuntary effects of other passions, from which we frequently derive safety, that we were not likely otherwise to procure. And if they appear productive of much benefit to us, thus severally considered, what fruits do they manifest when viewed in all their various combinations! Through some of these we are rendered capable of being influenced in favour of those around us, when they stand in need of our good offices; through others we are armed against the frauds and mischievous designs of men, who would circumvent, or injure us. They act as the bonds of society, and produce those great effects which arise from our acting in concert with each other, and pursuing

suing objects of common use, and of general benefit. To them may be referred many of the changes which happen in the fortunes of men: when by the kindness of friends they are raised to prosperity, or by neglect or aversion are abandoned to penury and distress. Although the variations in these do often *more immediately* testify the existence of an invisible Being, under whose government we live.

SERM.

II.

The unexpected deliverances we receive; the escapes from unforeseen dangers that we have; the sudden exaltations, and as sudden depressions, to which we are witnesses; the alterations in health, and in the situations of men, caused by various circumstances which it is not in human power either to bring about, or prevent; all admonish us to turn our thoughts to a superiour Ruler of events, Who regulates occurrences with a potency which we cannot resist; and by wisdom which is too deep for us to fathom. While yet we can perceive, that the vicissitudes in our fortunes tend greatly to our moral

SEEM. moral improvement; mortifying our desires, humbling our pride, checking our avidity, manifesting to us our own imbecility, and warning us in a language sufficiently intelligible, that we stand in need of the patronage of One, mightier than any of the sons of men, to preserve us amidst all the dangers, and defend us against the evils, to which we feel ourselves liable.

Indeed, a certain degree of reflection on the being we have, would manifest to us the perfect truth of the last clause of the text, by convincing us, that both the origin and continuance of the powers of our souls are far beyond the reach of our comprehension. That the soul is the principle of life and action in the body we feel; and that when it leaves them, our bodies become a motionless mass we know: but on what the soul itself rests for support; whence she derives those extraordinary accessions of strength, which she sometimes appears to gain; and on what her natural presumption of continuing in existence after she has left the body is

is founded, are questions, which, with many SERM.
others, the more they are considered, the II.
more evidently do they appear to admit of 
no answer so satisfactory as that suggested
by the words of the apostle, that "in God
we have our being,"

When we speak of the spiritual communications which pass between God and his creatures, we advert to a subject, the reality of which every man experiences; but having nothing to offer in proof of it but their own assertions, the greater part of mankind are, through fear of being laughed at by the thoughtless and profane, deterred from uttering their sentiments. Yet the light poured in, the courage infused, and the comfort spread abroad in our hearts, in return to the supplications of the sincere petitioners of Heaven, prove, that there is One who hears and answers. While our encrease in spiritual strength, and (according to the highest sense of which the phrase is capable) in greatness of mind, does as truly indicate accession from without of ourselves to promote

SERM. note this growth in grace, as that of the
II. body demonstrates the assumption of food
for its enlargement. And what in reason
can we believe of that Being who pours
into our hearts these streams of the waters
of life, but that He is, in truth, the foun-
tain of life, and the source of existence, by
Whom, and in Whom, we live and move,
and have our being? Or thinking thus :
Is there any degree of reverence or fear, or
gratitude, or love, which we must ac-
knowledge to be due unto Him? If not,
from henceforth, let our lives manifest these
to be our sentiments ; and while the love of
God dwelleth in our hearts, let us glorify
Him with our bodies and our souls, *because
they are His !*

SER-

SERMON III.

ON THE PROOFS OF A DEITY ARISING
FROM THE MATERIAL WORLD.

ACTS XIV. 17.

Nevertheless He left not Himself without witness, in that He did good, and gave us rain from Heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness.

IN my last discourse, I endeavoured to SERM.
III.
represent to you, in such a manner as might contribute to both the comprehension and remembrance of it, the testimony of the being and government of God, which our own existence, powers, and sensations supply. My intention in the present is to set before you the evidence which our all-glorious Creatour hath given of Himself,
by

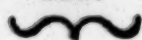
SERM. by that merciful provision made for man in
III. the formation and government of the natural world, to which St. Paul alludes in the words of the text; addressed by him to the inhabitants of an heathen city, who, on seeing a miracle wrought at his word, immediately concluded, (according to the ignorance that was in them) that he and Barnabas were two of the fancied deities they were wont to worship; and accordingly were preparing to offer a sacrifice unto them; when the apostles, shocked at their idolatrous attempt, dissuaded them from persisting in it, by representing to them, that while they were but men like themselves, they came to preach to them in the name of the living God, who made heaven and earth, and the sea, and all things that are therein; and Who, though He had suffered all nations to walk in their own ways, (worshipping as their benefactors, dumb images, or beings equally senseless, and unable to bless or assist them) still He had, by the benefits He conferred on mankind,

arising from the material World.

47

given them constant and palpable proofs of **SERM.**
His own existence and benevolence.

III.



Now to these proofs, neither past nor present generations could seriously turn their thoughts without being stricken with the very forcible evidence they contain; and however men have erred or been misled, in regard to the nature and unity of the Being to whose power and goodness we are indebted for the rain from Heaven, and the fruitful seasons which fill our hearts with food and gladness, they have, with one voice, ascribed these blessings to some superior Being, on whose will they have considered themselves as dependent for them, and, consequently, however remiss they may have appeared in returning thanks for them, yet when they have at any time been withholden, they have considered it as necessary to appease the power through whose anger they conceived the continuance of them was interrupted: thus acknowledging, that however the expression of it might be stifled, still on their hearts was imprinted

SERM. printed a conviction of the existence of
III. One above, who was not indifferent to their
conduct.

That we should thus owe to our sufferings, or our fears, those sentiments of devotion which ought to arise from gratitude, and a just estimation of the divine perfections, has been noticed as highly disgraceful to our race: and so well founded is the reproach, that to avoid being involved in it would alone be a sufficient motive for turning our thoughts to that witness of Himself, which God ever hath, and doth still bear, in the blessings which by His corn, His wine, His oil, and the other products of His earth, He dispenses among those who dwell thereon; and if proceeding further we consider, that enquiries of this kind will disclose to us the hand of an Almighty Guardian and Protectour constantly employed in our favour; the prospect of the consolation, the joy, and the security necessarily arising from the discovery of our being in a situation so advantageous, will inspire us
with

with vigour in our researches, and excite in SERM.
our breasts a spirit of attention, and eager- III.
ness for additional information, which will
permit us to leave scarcely any part of the
world around us unexplored, or uncon-
sidered.

That we may then enter at once on a
subject so congenial to our minds, so inte-
resting to our hearts ; behold all the accom-
modations, and all the opulence of human
life, from the most simple provision to the
rarest delicacies, from the most necessary
conveniences to the highest ornaments ;
whence are they originally obtained, but
from the surface, or the bowels of the earth ?
Only on this most general view, therefore,
we may justly observe, that the products
of this globe are most accurately suited to
the nature of the sons of men, whose habi-
tation it is. And since, if ye were to see
a tract of land well laid out in pastures,
carefully watered, and supplied with all the
buildings necessary for lodging and shelter-
ing cattle, and with ample store of provi-
sion

SERM. sion for the winter season, ye would justly
III. conclude, that these things contained in
themselves sufficient evidence, that they
were the works of some who were acquainted with the wants of the animals, and were willing to supply them; ye must, by a like course of reasoning, draw the same inference from the manner in which the whole earth is replenished, and acknowledge, that the rain and fruitful seasons, which fill our hearts with food and gladness, bear sure testimony to us of the existence of a Being who timely provideth for our wants, as knowing them long before.

But if, from this general conclusion, we proceed to more particular investigation, our enquiries will be recompensed in proportion to their extent. By joining rain and fruitful seasons together, the apostle evidently alludes to the natural connection which subsists between them; a connection which experience manifests so plainly, that there is scarcely any one so dull as not to have perceived, that rain from Heaven is
abso-

absolutely necessary for the production of SERM.
the fruits of the earth. Every eye can im- III.
mediately discern the pernicious conse-
quences of a failure of the usual supply;
the plants droop, the fruits languish, the
cattle are unable to gather their accustomed
quantity of food, the fond hope which the
husbandman entertained of an ample return
for his labour and his seed, is shaken, and
if the drought continue, is succeeded by a
certainty that his crop is past recovery. So
that no one need to be informed, that if
the yearly rains did not constantly descend
in a measure nearly proportioned to our
wants, the inhabitants of the land must be
exposed to all the evils of famine; and,
therefore, the regular supplies of them
which we receive, do bear witness to the
goodness, the wisdom, and the power of
Him, who furnishes us with them.

Neither ought our reflections on His pro-
vidence to be confined to the testimonies of
it which are immediately experienced by
ourselves. Should we not, on the contrary,

SERM. extend our thoughts to the still stronger
III. proofs it affords, by the various manners
in which this one blessing of rain is dispensed in the various climes of the earth? For in this such an adjustment is visible, as indicates most amply regulation founded on the knowledge of what is most beneficial to the several regions. In countries where the periods of wet and dry weather so regularly return at the appointed seasons, that the inhabitants know when to expect the changes, those products of the ground on which they chiefly subsist, would never arrive at perfection, had they not a more steady continuance of clear sky and a warm sun than we in this climate are wont to experience: as, on the other hand, the long periods of uninterrupted drought, by which the fruits of the middle parts of the earth are thus brought to maturity, would destroy those from which we in these lands gain our sustenance.

And thus is the earth laid out like a garden, where every compartment is assigned
to

to different products, and, consequently, SERM.
put by the master under a different course III.

of management; and, as in this case, the skill and attention of the gardener is demonstrated by the due arrangement, and able culture of the several crops, so is the providence and the might of the divine Governour of the world made known unto us, by the distribution of climates, and the correspondent assignment of seasons over the surface of the globe. Mark but a bed of tender plants artificially sheltered from the heat of the meridian sun, and ye will require no additional assurance of their having received this protection from the hand of One who was sensible of their approaching necessities, and regarded them sufficiently to provide against their arrival. And is not the same inference to be drawn from the admirable provision experienced in some hot countries, of the heaviest rains descending at the very time when the sun is directly over their heads, and consequently would, were not the fierceness of its rays thus repressed, prove insupportable to the inhabi-

SERM. tants? Or, is not the like testimony furnished by those stated breezes with which the burning regions of the torrid zone are refreshed, and rendered fit for human habitation?

But the apostle's reflection appears not to be confined to that supply of the necessities of life which we receive from the goodness of God; he speaks of filling our hearts with gladness as well as with food. Here then we should advert to the unnumbered variety of fruits with which the earth abounds: look to the beauties of the vegetable world; observe the pleasing colours which the plants display, and the grateful odours which they breathe. Consider what multitudes appear to be little else than ornamental, yet what satisfaction may be derived, what improvement gained by man, from the contemplation of them; and ye will perceive, that there are provided for us subjects of joy and exultation extending far beyond that point of gratification to which the supply of needful food and raiment

ment reaches. Unable as we are to estimate **SERM.**
the sum of human blifs arising from these **III.**
works of our great Creatour, yet may we
trace, with no small profit and delight,
various channels through which we derive
most important blessings from them.

For first, while our natural wants find
an abundant supply, there is given in addi-
tion to what is sufficient for this, a variety
in the productions of the earth, which both
prevents the disgust that would arise from
a constant repetition of the same food, and
contributes, by mixture as well as by
change, to preserve the health of our bo-
dies: and if ye call to mind how much
our enjoyment of any other good is lessened
or increased by the want or possession of this
one blessing of bodily health: if ye recol-
lect how weary, stale, and unprofitable,
seem all the uses of this world to one, the
flow of whose animal spirits is impeded by
disease, and with what redoubled relish they
are tasted by those who are in all the vigour
of health, ye will acknowledge the work

SERM. of a most beneficent hand, in the provision
III. which, not only in the healthful variety of
food, but in the rain from Heaven too, is
made to preserve the purity of the air,
through the generation of winds, by which,
instead of living in the midst of a stagnant
and putrid atmosphere, we are enabled to
inhale the wholesome breeze.

The medicinal plants scattered over the
earth, by the use of which we so often re-
cover that health which, through our own
fault or folly, we had for awhile lost, form
likewise part of that mass of evidence which
God hath given of Himself to the human
race: and the cogency of which is such,
that when delivered by means of them from
pain or debility, the most unthankful are
constrained to bless God in their hearts, for
that He hath given to men such things as
the root of rhubarb, and the bark of the
Peruvian shrub.

Neither any thing less than this is the
testimony of the divine foresight employed
in

in our favour, which we receive from the SERM.
effects that labour has on the productions of III.
the ground. By experiencing the recompence which care and diligence naturally receive, and by knowing how little will be obtained without them; by seeing that "he that keepeth his fig-tree, eateth the fruit thereof;" and that "the sluggard who will not plough by reason of the cold, beggeth in harvest, and hath nothing," are men brought to exert themselves in employments equally necessary to health of body and tranquillity of mind. The misery of a state of idleness in itself, and the more miserable consequences which frequently flow from it, need only to be mentioned to recall to your remembrance sufficient proofs of their reality. The necessity of labour, therefore, is most wisely and mercifully ordained, even for the prevention of great evils to mankind. In truth, had all mankind found they were not obliged to exert themselves to secure supplies of the necessaries of life, the state of degeneracy into which they would have sunk on their encrease after the flood,
would

SERM. would have proved much worse than that
III. barbarism into which a large portion of
them did fall, and from which they have
since been gradually emerging.

It is by the exertions to which difficulties give rise, that the human understanding is expanded, and our faculties are improved ; and though men, who draw their conclusions without attending sufficiently to facts, may imagine, that had the labour which is appointed to man under the sun been less, every salutary purpose might have equally been effected, and still his toil have been more tolerable ; yet look but to those ranks of society who enjoying a plentiful subsistence without the necessity of labour, are free to choose, whether they will employ their hours wisely or viciously, and ye will perceive, that very disproportionate indeed is the number of those who will accustom themselves to even an innocent use of their time without constraint. Were the whole world then composed entirely of men under none of those earnest calls to industry which
the

the present constitution of things affords, SERM.
think what a scene of vile debauchery, III.
ceaseless quarrels, and bloody animosities,
would ensue; all of which are now chiefly
perhaps prevented by the greater part of
men being too much engaged in their own
necessary business to have time so to indulge
their passions, and excite their spleen, as
they would do, did not the various employ-
ments of life call them off from merely
pleasing themselves, or observing the actions
and circumstances of others.

The labour appointed us therefore, being
thus necessary to preserve the members of
human society in any tolerable state of so-
briety and tranquillity, the appointment of
it is a cogent argument, that the Being who
ordained it for us, knew our nature, and
our defects, and acted with wisdom and
mercy, as well as with power in giving to
the earth, the place of our habitation, the
constitution it has; and, consequently, well
may we admire and praise the goodness of
the Lord, who hath dispensed the products
of

SERM. of this globe in such a manner as tends to
III. increase the employment of men as their
numbers also increase. For by the distribution of various fruits in different climes, that mutual exchange of commodities, which is the basis of commerce, was originally occasioned; and though many are the evils which the pursuit of foreign trade hath brought on the nations, (as what good hath not been abused?) yet unnumbered are the benefits which mankind have received through that intercourse to which trade gives rise. The numbers who go down to the sea in ships, and occupy their business in the great waters, form the smallest portion of the whole multitude, who, through commerce, gain a subsistence. The hands employed in building and equipping the vessels, and in collecting and preparing the materials necessary for them, would not easily be numbered: yet even these are few in comparison with the men, women and children, who are literally kept out of mischief, and who procure their support by raising the different products, or
manu-

manufacturing the various articles which SERM.
are transported from one country to another, ^{III.}
for the mutual benefit of all. While, by
means of this intercourse, civilization has
been extended in the world, the arts and
sciences introduced into the different regions
of it, and the knowledge of the most im-
portant truths, those I mean of religion,
by which we are made acquainted with our
own nature, with our capacity of everlast-
ing happiness, and the way to secure it,
carried through the nations; whence the stock
of human enjoyments hath been wonder-
fully encreased, and bliss unspeakable been
imparted to multitudes, which no man can
number.

Here then we may again put the ques-
tion, Hath not God borne most evident
witness to Himself in thus regarding the
sons of men? But should any part of that
most absurd evasion of the Epicureans, who
wished to persuade themselves that there is
no God, suggest itself to your hearts; that
the ingenuity and industry of men solely
have

SERM. have made such use of the things they find
III. on earth, and put affairs into this beneficial
train; but that hence no proof can be drawn
of any prior intention in the maker of them,
that they should be subservient to such pur-
poses: recollect, that it is the nice adjust-
ment I have all along remarked, of the
materials to the nature, the faculties, and
the wants of those who are to use them,
which is insisted on as yielding testimony
of the wisdom, goodness, and power of
Him, who ordained them all. The brute
animals, who have no such faculties as man
has to exercise and improve, have their
food prepared for them; they have only to
gather and consume it; and the little work
given them is commensurate with their
powers; as the formation of the nests of
birds, and the hives of insects, in the struc-
ture of which they never improve: but to
man, as endowed with higher abilities, a
more extensive field of intellectual employ-
ment is opened, and he is not only invited,
but in some measure compelled, to pursue
means that will enlarge his understanding,

and meliorate his mind: and such adjust-
ment, always to be discovered in the cases
we can thoroughly investigate, affords a
testimony of the existence of an Authour
who purposely framed it, little less strong
than that which the footsteps of a man yield
of his having passed through a path.

SERM.

III.

To be attentive to such testimony, and to
learn to know the Lord in his works, is
one of the surest means of obtaining happi-
ness that we can pursue. Various points
of this evidence we are all capable of ob-
serving; and as long as we retain the power
of reflection, nothing can hinder our em-
ploying our minds on them, when we are
disposed so to do; and the longer we con-
tinue it, the more pleasing we shall find the
task; the more circumstances we shall daily
discover so admirable in themselves, that
we shall wonder we had, till then, over-
looked them; and thus perceiving our at-
tention rewarded by increasing recompence,
we shall be led to trace the hand of our
Creatour in all things around us, until our
faith

SERM. faith in Him becomes almost incapable of
III. being shaken : and seeing the power, marking the goodness, and feeling the providence of God, we shall know in whom we trust, and hence derive a security in all situations, and even in that of the approach of death, the happiness of which no words can express, but of the reality of which we may be convinced by acquainting ourselves with Him who " hath never left Himself without witness, but hath done good, and given us rain from Heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness."

SERMON IV.

POLITICAL REVOLUTIONS THE JUDGMENTS
OF GOD.

DAN. IV. 17.

*To the intent that the living may know, that
the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of
men, and giveth it to whomsoever He will,
and setteth up over it the basest of men.*

THESE words are found in a vision SERM.
shewn to one, who, at the time of his IV.
seeing it, was the most powerful monarch
on the face of the earth; and, by the de-
claration they contain, lead our thoughts to
those proofs of God's moral government of
the world, which are perpetually exhibited
to us in the fates of nations; and which

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F

come

SERM. come in due course to be considered by us,
IV. after that evidence of His being and providence, which were laid before you in the two last discourses, as arising from our own frame, and the constitution of the natural world.

Much of the testimony of the being and constant superintendence of the Lord, afforded us by the predictions of the prophet, from whose writings the text is taken, stands entirely independent of the other proofs of the Jewish and Christian religion, though coinciding with them; for were there neither Jew nor Christian in the world, the regular succession of empires on earth, according to his words, would still prove, that the God of Daniel ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever He will.

It is the short-sightedness of unbelievers that has led them to object to the holy Scriptures, "that the promise of an universal diffusion of the knowledge of christianity

tianity has not been fulfilled ;" since that SERM.
promise is not restrained in point of IV.
time, and therefore, though not yet ac-
complished, may still be so hereafter.

While the events which lead to its completion are regularly marked out in the sacred writings, and have hitherto taken place in gradual course and due order ; and the parts of the earth mentioned in the Bible as the seats of empire, have become so in a manner most deserving of attention. For what, in the age of Daniel, rendered it probable, that the conquerour of the Persian empire should come from Greece ? or those who should destroy the kingdom of his successors, be, in their turn, succeeded by those who should be the leading powers of the whole world ? Yet, as such, are the present nations of Christendom, different portions of the ancient Roman empire, spoken of, and such have they proved ; carrying their arms, and extending their colonies east, west, and south. While the more populous empires of India and China have generally confined themselves within their ancient limits, and make a very inadequate

SERM. figure in the history of the world. We hear,
IV. indeed, that such nations exist; and we see,
by the articles of trade our merchants bring
from their country, that they are far advanced in arts and manufactures, but their fleets visit not our seas, nor are their armies seen on our shores, as those of Europe are on their's.

These grand circumstances are sufficient to awaken our attention to this subject, and convince us, that further enquiry into these points will lead to a discovery of still further proofs of the overruling hand of God being employed in effecting the political revolutions which have taken place on the earth. To such an enquiry, therefore, let me now lead your thoughts, by reminding you of the wonderful manner in which, through events that no human discernment could foresee, nor any earthly power prevent, the fate of kingdoms hath often been determined. In our own times, we have seen the most unexpected changes rapidly take place; and, in particular, been witness to a
country,

country, that seemed, between nature and SERM.
art, to have been rendered almost inaccessible IV.
to an enemy, having been laid open to in-
vasion by a circumstance, which had not its
parallel in Europe for years before. The
transaction to which I allude, is the irrup-
tion of the French into Holland, which
was suddenly brought about by a frost of
unusual severity, that at once rendered use-
less all the dispositions made to defend the
country, by laying it under water ; and, in
its consequences, overthrew the indepen-
dence of a nation, whose commerce was
most extensive, and whose political conse-
quence was such, as to render this change
in their situation of most material concern
to the other nations of Europe. Here was
a nation subjugated by means entirely inde-
pendent of human power and contrivance ;
and in like manner was our own country
formerly preserved, when menaced by the
well-known Spanish armada : since that
formidable armament received it first damage
from a storm ; after which its shattered re-
mains were easily beaten by the force which

SERM. the then sovereign of this land could muster.

IV. Now, in both these events, so visible is the divine hand, that through them a lesson is given to mankind parallel to that of the text, that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and directeth the affairs of it according to his good pleasure.

Yet what are these in comparison with the instances which the more extensive scene of ancient history presents! in which may be discovered unnumbered proofs of the everruling sway of an invisible power controuling the counsels of the great, and disappointing the views of the ambitious, raising up scourges to punish nations for their sins, and suddenly taking away those vessels of wrath, when once they have accomplished the work to which they were appointed. Of such instruments, either good or bad, the names of some have reached the ears of almost all men. For who has not heard of Nebuchadnezzar, Cyrus, Alexander, and Cæsar? in the history of each
of

of whom the hand of Providence may most SERM.
evidently be traced.

IV.

Into subjection to the first of these, Nebuchadnezzar, were given many and powerful states: he found no enemy able to stand before him; and carried his empire to an extent before unequalled on the earth. Yet, in less than thirty years after his death, was this mighty kingdom overthrown, and the nations subject to it brought under the dominion of the Medes and Persians; the great instrument in establishing which was the renowned Cyrus; a man particularly named by the prophet Isaiah a hundred years before he was born, as the very person whom God vouchsafed to appoint to be the deliverer of His people from their captivity in Babylon, and whose life and actions, as it might be expected, make a most prominent and remarkable figure in history. For the character of this very conquerour has been selected by one of the most celebrated writers of the nation, which has surpassed all others in producing writers, as that un-

SERM. der which he could best convey the description of a perfect prince. That a person thus particularly pointed out by a prophet in Judæa, many years previous to his birth, should afterwards be made the theme of an eminent historian in Greece, is one of those admirable circumstances which are adapted to impress on our minds the absolute certainty of the Scriptures having been given by the inspiration of Him, who governs, as well as made the world, and all that is therein; and naturally leads us to enquire, what other particulars worthy of observation are recorded of this instrument of Providence?

Born in a province at that time under the dominion of another country, by a course of uninterrupted success he came not only to the crown of the realm, to which his native land was subject, but extended his authority over other kingdoms, until he had secured the command of an empire which contained no small portion of the civilized world. But the most important
of

of his conquests, the capture of the renowned city of Babylon, was principally attended with such circumstances as manifested Cyrus to be a chosen vessel of the Lord. Not only the river Euphrates, on which that city was situate, but the brazen gates through which the city was entered from the banks of the river, proved no defence against this bearer of a divine commission. The former of these the prophet Jeremiah had declared should be dried up. "A drought is upon her waters, (speaking of Babylon) and they shall be dried up." (Jer. L. 38.) And of the latter the Lord had thus spoken by Isaiah: "Thus saith the Lord to His anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden to subdue nations before him, and I will loose the loins of kings, to open before him the two-leaved gates; and the gates shall not be shut." For these very particular words were by the exertions of Cyrus, in draining off that part of the river which ran through the city, and by the negligence which a great festival produced in it, accurately accomplished;

SERM. plished ; the gates towards the river being
IV. carelessly left open, so that the Persian army
found an unobstructed entrance into the heart of the city, by which all the treasures of that wealthy capital became to him an easy prey : and one early consequence of the dominion he thus acquired, was the release of the Jews on the expiration of that very term during which the prophet Jeremiah had declared they should continue in captivity. Which effect of the exaltation of Cyrus manifested in the most glowing colours to the world, that “ it is the Lord God of Israel who ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever He will.”

The monarchy thus established by Cyrus was overthrown by one of character no less remarkable, the celebrated Alexander the Great : who, though not called by name, is nevertheless so described by the prophet Daniel, as the conquerour of that empire which Cyrus established, that no one at all acquainted with the course of ancient events,
and

and the characters by which they were SERM.
brought about, can be at a loss to discern at IV.
whom the description points. The rapidity
of this king's conquests, his remarkable
escapes from perilous situations, into which
his own rashness had thrown him, and the
suddenness of his departure from life, when
he had compleated the work assigned him
by the word of the Lord, all mark him
for an especial instrument of Providence.
While his empire being afterwards divided
into the same number of portions, as had
before been particularized in the holy Scrip-
tures, leaves no room to doubt whose over-
ruling hand directed all these things to the
accomplishment of His own counsels.

The last ancient conquerour I mentioned
as of renown sufficient to be not unheard of
by you, was Julius Cæsar, who, from the
condition of a private citizen, raising him-
self through a variety of the most hazard-
ous enterprizes to the absolute dominion
of Rome and its dependencies, when he had
once prepared the way for the establishment
of

SERM. of that monarchy which has been so important an instrument in the dispensations of Heaven on this globe, fell by a conspiracy, of which he was forewarned, and by an affassination, against which, according to all human appearance, he might most easily have secured himself. And thus, by the history of these conquerours, who have passed through the world with such splendour, is there pressed on our attention the suggestion delivered in the former part of the text, “ that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth to whomsoever He will.”

And for the latter part of it, “ and setteth up over it the basest of men.”—These words evidently allude more immediately to the restoration of Nebuchadnezzar himself to his kingdom, after he had been for some years reduced to that degree of abasement as to be driven from human society to dwell with the beasts of the field, and eat grass as oxen. But in their more distant signification they extend to those
extra-

extraordinary revolutions by which the SERM.
rulers of nations sometimes rise from the IV.
dregs of the people, and thrones are filled
by slaves. The ancient and haughty nation
of Egypt hath afforded an extraordinary
instance of this, in perfect consonance with
the word of the Lord by His prophet Eze-
kiel, who declared, that it should be the
basest of kingdoms. Subdued and plun-
dered first by the Babylonians, then by the
Persians, she afterwards fell into the hands
of the Grecians, and by a family of these
was she governed, until she became a pro-
vince of the Roman empire, ruled by the
slaves of its prince. And if, after the fall
of this power, she became again for a short
interval under the Saracens, the seat of in-
dependent princes, they were yet of a fo-
reign race; and she has now, for centuries,
been governed literally by the slaves of the
Turk, who, on account of their characters,
no less than their origin, merit the title of
“ the basest of men.”

Was

SERM. Was not, during the great rebellion in
IV. our own country, the authority of the ban-
ished monarch seized, and his place sup-
plied by men who rose from the dregs of
the people? And in the revolutions that
have taken place among the French, a
sovereign of the highest lineage has been
succeeded in power by those who would
have been proud to have holden a menial
office in his palace.

Now these events claim our attention as
proceeding not merely from those visible
causes, with the observation of which many
are satisfied, but from the just indignation
of God against the nations in which they
have happened, poured on them in such a
manner as to reach to all ranks, and extend
as generally as the wickedness of the people
that are to be punished. Nor do men give
to the Lord the glory due unto Him, as
long as they fail to ascribe these great oc-
currences to the judgments of the Most
High, thereby acknowledging, that " He
ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth
it

it to whomsoever He will, and sometimes **SERM.**

“setteth over it” for the sins of the people, **IV.**

“even the basest of men.”

But in the history of no other part of the world have these truths been so strongly exemplified as in that of the people of Israel. The first monarch they had was suddenly called to the throne, and for his disobedience to the divine command, had the kingdom quickly rent from him: the second, who carried the dominion of Israel to its utmost extent, was elevated from tending the sheep-folds to be ruler of the people; and, in aftertimes, when the land was divided into two kingdoms, the number of generations in which that of Israel should continue in a particular family, was repeatedly specified, that it might be known by whose decree the revolution was brought about, and whose sentence put down one, and set up the other. Indeed, this of Jacob was from among all the families of the earth, particularly selected, to shew forth the glory of God, and therefore His mercies and his

SERM. judgments are especially marked in all that
IV. befel them, that therein the arm of the
Lord being made bare, we may understand, it is that which works among all other people; and learn to ascribe the moral discipline, which both nations and individuals undergo, to its real Authour, the God and Father of all, who suffers no man to pass through life without repeated and sufficient admonitions of His universal providence and uninterrupted superintendence.

Thus then it is, by our Bibles alone, that we can be taught to reason properly on what befalls us in the world: by them the good and evil which we suffer will in general be explained; and we may learn from them not to be puffed up at our own prosperity, nor envy that of others; not to be dejected at the crosses with which we may meet, nor judge harshly of others for the ill success that attends them. Not to be elated at success; because, if your elevation be all the ground you have for thinking yourself a favourite of heaven, behold the basest of men

men are sometimes set even upon thrones! **SERM.**
Not to repine at others being preferred be- **IV.**
fore you, though their unworthiness be
manifest to all; because by this you can
know neither love nor hatred. Not to per-
mit crosses to throw you into despondency;
since these are oftentimes sent in mercy as
corrections, and received as such by our-
selves, not uncommonly end, like the de-
gradation of Nebuchadnezzar, in a return
to all the honours of our station; or, like
the affliction of Job, in a still ampler share
of good. Not, lastly, to conclude, that
others are sinners because we see them suffer-
ing: since even the trees which do bear
fruit are by your heavenly Father purged,
that they may bring forth more fruit.

From the same holy Scriptures too we
may inform ourselves, how to reason on the
unexampled political revolutions that have
of late years taken place in Christendom;
not impiously and prophanely to conclude,
from their success, that the favour of
Heaven attends those wretches, who tram-

SERM. pling under foot every maxim of truth,
IV. every obligation, moral and religious; who
denying the Father and the Son, proceed,
with atheistical fury, to obliterate, as far
as they are able, every degree of faith, and
every vestige of piety, from the earth: but
to confess that those days are fast approach-
ing, in which the power and tyranny of
Antichrist, rising to its greatest height, shall
suddenly be destroyed by the appearance of
the Lord, to perform the mercy promised
to His people, that "being gathered from
all nations, whither He hath scattered them,
and delivered out of the hands of their ene-
mies, they may serve Him without fear, in
holiness and righteousness before Him."
For such I hope to prove to you in the next
discourse, is the designation of the stock of
Israel; which, though now, as the tree
which the Babylonian monarch saw repre-
senting himself, it has its branches cut off,
its leaves shaken off, and its fruit scattered,
shall still bud forth again, and fill the land,
extending her boughs unto the sea, and her
branches unto the river.

In

In the mean time, ye, I trust, will not **SERM.**
permit to slip from your recollection the **IV.**
instances now set before you, in which the
Most High hath so intelligibly suggested to
all who hear of them, that “ it is He who
ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth
it to whomsoever He will ;” but occasion-
ally calling them to mind, learn under all
the chances and changes of this mortal life,
to sanctify the Lord God in your hearts,
and let Him be your fear, Him be your
dread, and make Him your confidence, and
your rock of defence !

SERMON V.

THE DESIGNATION OF THE PEOPLE OF
ISRAEL.

ISAIAH XLIII. 21.

*This people have I formed for myself; they
shall shew forth my praise.*

IT is recorded of our Lord and his SERM:
apostles, that they repeatedly exhorted V.
those whom they addressed diligently to
examine their doctrines, and prove the va-
lidity of the evidence produced in support
of them. Had this exhortation been re-
ceived with a degree of candour any way
comparable to that with which it was urged;
the opponents of the Gospel would not
only have been much less in number, but
the best known and most able among them

SERM. would have saved themselves much time
v. and labour, which they have mispent, in
framing objections that have no solid foundation. Among other cavils that would by this mean have been prevented, are those which arose at what the preachers of christianity taught, in respect to the particular favour and patronage with which God had been pleased to bless the nation of the Jews. The incredibility of the Deity's preferring, to all other people, one of an origin so mean, of manners so unsocial, and which made so little a figure in the world, and was every way so despicable, was, with earnestness, insisted on by the most learned Heathens. "Why were not," it was asked, "the Greeks or Romans, nations whose greatness and learning had justly gained them the respect of mankind, selected, to have the divine will first communicated to them, rather than the inhabitants of Palestine, who had been continually slaves to their neighbours, and dwelt in an unfrequented corner of the earth?"

Now

Now these objections would not, per- SERM.
haps, have been groundless, if it had been V.
affirmed, either that God chose this people
during the latter ages of their common-
wealth, or that He gave them the prefer-
ence on account of their own merit, or in-
trinſick righteouſneſs. But the contrary of
both theſe things was expreſſly taught:
the Hebrews were ſeparated from the reſt
of men, to be made the particular inſtru-
ments of divine providence, long before the
exiſtence of either Athens or Rome; for
the diſpenſation in which they were to be
employed, required, to the perfecting of it,
a courſe of numerous ages. And the divine
counſel, in appointing the Iſraelites for this
purpoſe, was determined by the favour
which God bare to their fathers; who,
through the alacrity with which they
obeyed his commands, in preſerving them-
ſelves from the pollutions of idolatry, then
daily gaining ground in the world; by the
confidence they manifeſted in his truth and
power, by renouncing their country and
kindred, on the promiſe of greater bleſſings

SERM. from his hand ; and by the zealous attachment
v. ment they ever shewed to his service, procured to have their seed after them chosen for “ the peculiar people of the Lord.”

And had the writings to which the preachers appealed been examined with fairness, and the discovery of the truth, not that of some plausible ground for objection, been made the object of the search, it would not only have appeared that these things were so, but have been seen too, that every circumstance in the history, and every peculiarity in the constitution of the Jews, indicated the truth more plainly declared in the text, “ that they were first in the person of their great progenitor separated from all other nations ; then gradually encreased into a numerous people, and at length most closely connected among themselves, by a code of laws given them from Heaven, and as widely disjoined from the rest of mankind, that they might be instruments adequate to the performance of some great purposes of the divine providence, and while they manifested to the world the glorious attributes of
the

the one true God, and the reality of his in-
terposition in human affairs, they might
become a proper mean through which to
convey to us any future revelation of his
will He might see fit to make.”

SERM.
V.
~~~~~

For such is the interpretation I would  
put on the words before us; since every  
great event that hath happened to that na-  
tion, whether adverse or prosperous, hath  
contributed to shew forth the praise of the  
Lord, by manifesting either the severity of  
His justice on the abandoned, or the un-  
speakable greatness of His mercy towards  
those who obey His laws: besides that their  
constitution seems to have been purposely  
calculated to support the evidence brought  
for the truth of the Gospel by the singular  
tendency of it to render a new doctrine,  
first preached and received by the truly re-  
ligious among them, more credible than if  
it had been set on foot in any other nation.  
For that this was the case will be eminently  
visible from the brief review of their history,  
and part of their laws, which I shall now  
take,

SERM. take, for the purpose of discovering how  
V. wonderfully consistent they are with the  
counsel of God thus declared by his prophet, "This people have I formed for myself; they shall shew forth my praise." And as it cannot but be both useful and entertaining to a rational mind to trace the footsteps of God's wisdom in the moral, as well as the natural world, and observe, that as in the latter He hath endued several animals with instincts, the utility of which to man hath not been discovered till ages after their creation, so in the former He hath made various institutions, the advantage flowing from which hath, like the other, remained long unknown, but like that too, when once seen, been found constituted to endure even to the consummation of all things; I hope your attention will keep pace with my discourse.

First, then, were we to say only, that the circumstances of this people's history are singular, we should speak very inadequately of them, for they are more, they are wonderful,



derful, and extremely interesting to the SERM.  
whole race of mankind. Behold a people v.  
dwelling alone, and not reckoned among  
the nations! whose antiquity is indis-  
putable, and the memory of whose great  
progenitors is, to this day, revered through  
the East, as that of men who were the  
favourites of Heaven. If you demand of  
the ancient western writers an account of  
this race, they can return you none but  
what is intricate and obscure, and at the  
same time worked up with such colouring,  
as too plainly betrays the invidious hand of  
an enemy. If you consult the few scattered  
fragments of Phenician and Babylonish  
histories, which the tyranny of Rome, the  
blind zeal of barbarian bigotry, and the  
ravages of time, have left us; these, in-  
deed, being penned by men who had oppor-  
tunity of becoming better acquainted with  
their history, speak more favourably and  
honourably of the people: but still, though  
you add the testimony of these to that of  
the others, little satisfaction can be gained  
but on this one point, that there was a  
mutual enmity ever reigning between the  
Jews

SERM. Jews and the Heathens, occasioned by the  
V. difference of their religions; the former  
esteeming accursed all who would not embrace theirs; the latter holding the Jewish religion to be the most vile of superstitions.

The subject of opinions so opposite as these, one should, at the first view, imagine, had something peculiar in it, and greatly is this presumption justified by the wonderful revolution that hath been since brought about in the world, by which this religion, whose votaries were used to be stigmatized with the names of impious and abominable, is now acknowledged, in all those parts of the world where it was most forwardly condemned, as well as in others, to have been founded on divine revelation; the God of Israel is believed to be the only true God; those cities and nations which were the boldest in denying his power and godhead, and in persecuting his worshippers, are desolated and destroyed, while His people, though in a state of rejection, caused, as they themselves own, by their  
sins

sins against Him, who so often brought SERM.  
salvation to their fathers, and had given so V.  
manifold proofs of His universal and su-  
preme dominion, are still kept separate from  
the rest of men, and still continue capable  
of being made, on their repentance, as  
signal examples of the mercy, as they at  
present are, of the justice of the Lord,  
whose name alone is Jehovah. Wherefore  
there is good reason to mistrust the unfavourable representations made by some, of  
the origin, customs, and religion of this  
nation; and since the generality of mankind have given their voices against the  
truth of their accounts in relation to the  
last, it would be acting but simply to rely  
on those they have left us of the others.

Let us then turn to the people themselves,  
and enquire what information they can  
afford us; for it is probable that they are at  
least better acquainted with their own history  
than strangers are; and as they can  
produce a long series of publick records,  
they have assuredly a right to expect that  
we



**SERM.** we should receive their's with the same candour and readiness to believe them, as we do those of any other nation. Their enemies, indeed, object that these their ancient writings contain things so great and miraculous, as to shock a reasonable man's faith; but as it is highly absurd to attempt to overthrow a known fact, by any argument whatever, so it is no less so to deny a well-attested miracle, when it is both ascribed to a hand confessedly adequate to the performance of it, and affirmed to have been wrought for no other end than such as is worthy the interference of such an hand.

Now the miracles related in the Jewish Scriptures are attended with both these requisites, for they are attributed to the power of the Deity himself; and his interposition is said to have been for the support and advancement of truth among men, for the encouragement of righteousness, and for the execution of justice and judgment on falsehood and vice. Thus Abraham, the great father of the race, having, at the command  
of

of God, separated himself from his kindred, SERM.  
that in one family of the earth at least the V.  
knowledge of the real Creatour might be  
preserved, though it were lost in the rest ;  
and he, and his immediate descendants,  
Isaac and Jacob, having shewn their firm  
reliance on the only God, having dedicated  
themselves to the worship of him solely,  
terming themselves his servants, thus testi-  
fying against the impiety of their cotem-  
poraries, who, though not yet advanced to  
the extreme folly of entirely excluding the  
Almighty from their temples, yet had be-  
gun to worship his creatures together with  
Him ; the hand of Heaven was signally  
with them, and the divine protection they  
enjoyed was manifested in that “ when  
they were yet strangers in the land, and  
went from one nation to another, from one  
kingdom to another people, He suffered no  
man to do them wrong ; but reprov'd even  
kings for their sakes, saying, Touch not  
mine anointed, and do my prophets no  
harm !”

Neither

SERM. Neither did this particular favour of God  
V. to the patriarchs pass unnoticed by the inhabitants of the countries in which they sojourned; *they* observed their advantageous situation, and sought their alliance; yet they had not wisdom enough to preserve themselves from deserting the service of that God, the blessed fruits of whose patronage were so plainly set before them; but proceeded from one degree of pollution to another, till at length the measure of their iniquities being full, the descendants of these very persons, who had been signs unto them, and by whom was set before them a lesson, which, if followed, would have led them to salvation, were, by the hand of Providence, brought forth to execute the justly destined destruction on these incorrigible nations.

While the sins of the Canaanites, however, were gradually rising to that height as to call down the divine vengeance, the chosen race had some preparatory scenes to pass through. First, the watchful care of Providence over them was manifested by wonder-



wonderfully securing them an asylum from SERM.  
the evil which so sorely afflicted their V.  
neighbours ; for in Egypt they escaped the  
pressure of famine. There too, as in a fa-  
vourable soil, their numbers most rapidly  
increased ; until their growing greatness  
exciting the jealousy of the king, *he*, with  
the vilest ingratitude, endeavoured to crush  
that family, which had, a few years before,  
given in Joseph a favour to his country.

The counsels of the wicked seldom prosper ! All that this wretched monarch reaped from his cruel policy was, that he himself soon became, in the hands of the divine justice, a vessel of wrath, fitted to destruction. While the Israelites were brought forth with a mighty hand, and a stretched-out arm, by the God of their fathers ; whose signs and wonders wrought in Egypt, tended to convince all who should hear of them of his supreme power, and were calculated to impress sentiments of awe and gratitude on the minds of the people delivered ; whom now, according to

SERM. his covenant with Abraham, he was about  
V. to put in possession of the promised land;  
and therefore he now first gave them a  
settled constitution, and established such laws  
among them as were well adapted to form  
them into a “ people fit to shew forth his  
praise.”

The first part of these laws, or rather the great summary of the whole, the ten commandments, were delivered to all the people assembled together, by a voice from a thick cloud, attended with such awful marks of the divine presence, as filled the congregation with terrour and amazement, and inclined them in future to hear, and believe whatever Moses told them from God: and the sequel of them was given through the mediation of this much-favoured man, containing among many other institutions, in which justice, purity, and wisdom, are eminently visible, some that more particularly claims our present attention, on account of the effect which was clearly intended from them, and which they have had in  
rendering

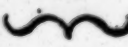
rendering a revelation first divulged among SERM.  
that people more credible than if set on foot V.  
in any other nation. Among such are to  
be numbered, first, those laws which incul-  
cated the belief and worship of one only  
God, and banishing all kinds of idolatry  
and superstition, restrained them in their  
intercourse with those nations who were  
guilty of them; for these laws tended to  
secure them from becoming dupes to such  
forgeries as those men, who pretended to be  
the favourites of particular deities, made to  
succeed in other countries. Secondly, those  
which forbade any false pretences to revela-  
tion among themselves, giving them marks  
by which to discern a prophet really speak-  
ing by the command of God, from one  
falsely affirming he did so, and commanding  
them to punish summarily and capitally all  
who were guilty of this presumption.

These laws rendered it evidently very  
difficult for an impostor to succeed in Israel,  
as well as dangerous to attempt success;  
especially after the nation had once (as we



(SERM. shall presently see they did) severely smarted  
v. for their neglect of these injunctions, and  
were thereby become more attentive to  
them; for after the law was delivered, the  
strongest sanctions were added in its sup-  
port. And when the days of Moses (by  
whose hand God had led them to the borders  
of Canaan) drew to an end, he, by the di-  
vine command, repeated the whole to the  
people, promising, on the one hand, the  
greatest blessings if they observed it, and,  
on the other, denouncing on them, if they  
proved disobedient, such curses as cannot  
be even read without horror. And their  
history, from that time to the present, is a  
continued manifestation of the truth of his  
words; the changes of their situation hav-  
ing constantly followed the alterations in  
their conduct.

Did they walk in the statutes of their  
God? He then blessed them in all things,  
and their enemies were unable to stand be-  
fore them. Did they, on the contrary, turn  
aside from his commandments? Then their  
prof-

prosperity ceased; and they were spoiled, SERM.  
and enslaved, by those whom they used to V.  
spoil. Thus they passed the years with   
various fortunes, until the age of David;  
and, when under his government, they  
steadily applied themselves to keep the law  
of the Lord, their affairs again became uni-  
formly prosperous; and during the reigns  
of him and his son Solomon, their empire  
was carried to the promised extent, and  
reached from the Red Sea to the sea of the  
Philistines, and from the desert to the river.

But, on the decease of this last monarch,  
the ten tribes having separated from those  
of Judah and Benjamin, the golden calves  
were set up in Bethel and Dan; and hence-  
forth, in both kingdoms, (for that of Judah  
soon followed the other in apostacy) things  
continued, with but few intervals, growing  
worse and worse; idolatry was almost esta-  
blished; and so great was the corruption,  
that the prophets prophesied falsely, and  
the people loved to have it so. The Lord's  
hand, therefore, was no longer withholden;

SERM. the sister kingdoms were, in their turns,  
 V. carried away captive, with this difference  
 only, that the subjects of the one were  
 dispersed not to return until after many  
 days, while those of the other were taken  
 away only for a definite time, then to be  
 restored to their country.

The execution of this sentence of captivity was (as may be expected in all the dispensations of Heaven) useful not to one only, but to several ends; first, justice was thereby executed on an ungrateful people; the knowledge of the God of Israel, and of the proofs given of his truth and power, was disseminated in various parts of the world, and the nation, who was to be restored, learnt to be in future more cautious of leaving his service for that of idols, of breaking his sabbaths, and of listening to false pretenders to revelation from Him. The scrupulousness of the Jews, after their return from Babylon, in respect to the two former points, is sufficiently known, and in regard to the last, the fear of listening to pre-



pretenders to revelation, that probably had **SERM.**  
some share in the perverseness which was **V.**  
afterwards shewn in the case of a true pro-  
phet; and might partly cause that back-  
wardness to believe the evidence our Saviour  
His self gave of his divine mission, which  
seems to have reigned, in some measure, in  
every Jewish breast.

But whether it sprang from this, or any other cause, the backwardness I mention was, by the wise and merciful ordainment of God, turned to the most excellent purpose, since it gave occasion to Christ to produce such testimony of his truth as none but one authorized by God Himself could give. For God having given his people the note of a false prophet in those words of the law, "If a prophet speaketh in the name of the Lord, if the thing follow *not*, nor come to pass, *that* is the thing which the Lord hath *not* spoken; but the prophet hath spoken it *presumptuously*." It was justly to be concluded from thence, not merely that if the thing *did come* to pass,

H 4 that

SERM. that was a sign of the truth of the prophet,  
V. but that it was moreover a sign allowed by  
 God Himself, and which he had, in some measure, pledged himself not to permit any pretender to assume. When our Lord, therefore, to satisfy his disciples, appealed to the truth of His prophecies, concerning His own death and resurrection, He gave them the plainest line by which to form their opinion concerning Him; a line which admitted of no misapplication on *their* part, and of no deceit on *His*.

But further; while the scrupulous caution of the more honest and truly religious Jews helped to make the evidence for the Gospel most compleat and unexceptionable, even the obstinacy and perverseness of the abandoned part of them did likewise contribute to the same end. For it having been declared in the law, that God would raise up a prophet among them like unto Moses, to whom if they did not listen, He would require it of them; when one who in so many particulars resembled Moses, as  
Jesus

Jesus did, appeared, and they did not listen SERM.  
to Him, the punishment which overtook V.  
them, both testified the lasting truth of the   
Authour of their law, and formed a powerful demonstration to all who should become acquainted with these circumstances, that Jesus was, indeed, the prophet promised ; and as part of that punishment, the dispersion and consequent misery of the bulk of the Jews, continues to this day, it may be properly said, that *we ourselves* are partly *eye witnesses* of the truth of these things ; and therefore of that too of the text, “ that the peculiar designation of this extraordinary people was, that they should be to the rest of mankind, a perpetual monument of God’s moral government of the world ; and, by the consistency of their fate with their conduct, be a living testimony of His truth, justice, and mercy ; and, finally, a lasting evidence of the great truths made known through the preaching of chosen persons of their nation to all mankind, that God hath sent his only begotten Son into the world to redeem us, and instruct us in his will, and will  
in



SERM. in the end, judge us by the gospel he hath  
V. left: whereof, we may well add, He hath  
 given assurance unto all men, in that He  
hath punished, in a manner so exemplary,  
the people who first rejected that gospel.

When I observed, in the former part of this discourse, that the Jewish nation still continue capable of being made, on their repentance, as signal examples of the mercy, as they at present are of the justice of the Lord, I spoke in allusion to those predictions of the prophets and apostles, in which the restoration of that people to the land given to Abraham and his seed for ever, is openly foretold. Thus, by the prophet Jeremiah, it is declared, that their dispersion shall not end in their dissolution, but that they shall be gathered to God, and to their Messiah, (mentioned by the title of David their king, as being the son of David) in the following passage of his thirtieth chapter. “ Thus speaketh the Lord God of Israel, saying, Write all the words that I have spoken to thee in a book. For lo, the  
days

days come, saith the Lord, that I will bring SERM.  
again the captivity of my people Israel and V.  
Judah, saith the Lord; and I will cause   
them to return to the land that I gave to  
their fathers, and they shall possess it. And  
these are the words that the Lord spake con-  
cerning Israel and concerning Judah. For  
thus saith the Lord, We have heard a voice  
of trembling, of fear, and not of peace.  
Ask ye now, and see whether a man doth  
travail with child? Wherefore do I see  
every man with his hands on his loins, as  
a woman in travail, and all faces are turned  
into paleness? Alas! for that day is great,  
so that none is like it: it is even the time  
of Jacob's trouble; but he shall be saved  
out of it. For it shall come to pass in that  
day, saith the Lord of hosts, that I will  
break his yoke from off thy neck, and I  
will burst thy bonds, and strangers shall no  
more serve themselves of him: but they  
shall serve the Lord their God, and David  
their king, whom I will raise up unto them.  
Therefore fear thou not, O my servant  
Jacob, saith the Lord; neither be dismayed,  
O Israel:

*The Designation of the People of Israel.*

SERM. O Israel: For lo, I will save thee from afar,  
 v. and thy seed from the land of their captivity;  
 ~~~~~ and Jacob shall return and be at rest,  
 and be quiet, and none shall make him
 afraid, for I am with thee, saith the Lord,
 to save thee: though I make a full end
 of all nations whither I have scattered thee,
 yet will I not make a full end of thee."

When our blessed Lord himself foretold the desolation of Jerusalem, He signified, that it should continue only a limited time, by saying, "Jerusalem shall be trodden down by the Gentiles, *until* the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled." And His apostle Paul hath explicitly declared, that as the gifts and calling of God are without repentance, so, though blindness in part has now happened unto Israel, yet the covenant of the Lord with them, "that there shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and turn away ungodliness from Jacob," shall be performed, "and so all Israel shall be saved." Consistently with which ye will find, on carefully examining the words of the prophets,

phets, that after foretelling the dispersion **SERM.**
and sufferings of their countrymen, they **v.**
almost universally speak of their restoration,
in the last days, to the favour of God, and
all the blessings of His mercy.

This receiving, which St. Paul declares shall be life from the dead, that is, as explained by St. John, shall be accompanied, or immediately followed by the first resurrection, shall be preceded, we are assured, by such a scene of apostacy from the truth, and such daring blasphemy of God, as the earth never before exhibited ; when such a scene, therefore, begins to open in the world, great is the consolation which Christians may derive from recollecting, that however miserable its effects are on them, it is yet preparatory to the glorious manifestation of the Redeemer, when He shall appear to complete the dispensation, by turning away iniquity from Jacob, reigning before His saints, and adding to all His other triumphs that over the last enemy which shall be destroyed, which is *Death*.

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SERMON VI.

ON THE PREDICTIONS RELATING TO THE
MESSIAH.

ST. JOHN I. 45.

*We have found Him, of Whom Moses in the
law, and the prophets did write, Jesus of
Nazareth, the Son of Joseph.*

THOSE who view the testimony which SERM.
God hath been pleased to bear to the VI.
truth of His Gospel, only in its detached ~
portions, can have but a very inadequate
idea of that vast weight of evidence which
arises from considering these as connected
with each other, and forming together one
great body of testimony, extending, in
miracles and prophecies, from the fall of
our

SERM. our first parents to the consummation of all
VI. things. True it is, that the personal works
of our blessed Saviour, and His resurrection,
are in themselves sufficient to prove His
divine mission ; for “ no man could have
done the works that He did, unless God
had been with Him.” But when, in addition
to these, we are informed, that these
miracles, and this resurrection, were fore-
told long before, nay, were made the sub-
jects of a course of prophecy ; the prepa-
ration that God was thus pleased to make
for His Messiah, and the warning He thus
gave the world of His approach, bespeak
a still greater care of Heaven to impress on
the minds of the human race the truth and
importance of this divine Messenger.

That the Jews were in earnest expectation
of this great Person at the very time of His
appearance, may, in some measure, I con-
ceive, be collected from the words of the
text ; “ We have found, saith Philip, Him
of whom Moses in the law, and the pro-
phets did write.” For, are not these evi-
dently

dently the words of a man who had discovered One for whom he and his friends had long been looking? and the ground of this expectation was, as St. Paul said of one part of it, the promise to Abraham, older than the law; commencing from the hope of deliverance given to Adam, when in the sentence pronounced on the serpent, the Lord God said, "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." For such a promise of future triumph over him, who, by betraying them into transgression, had robbed them of their happy state, must naturally have become to Adam and his wife, and by tradition from them, to their posterity, specifically the most important object of their hopes; and though the consequences of such a victory were not mentioned, we must suppose the earlier generations of men to be very unlike the race at present, if we think they did not draw from this promise of their merciful Creatour, conclusions favourable to their

SERM.

VI.

SERM. own wishes ; and reasoning from what had
VI. been incurred by the victory of the serpent
over man, the curse of death, did not thence
infer, that man's triumph over the serpent
might possibly be attended with a restoration
to life and immortality.

But however individuals might paint the future deliverance of the race, the general expectation of the promised victory must have continued very lively during at least the life of the first man, and that of his immediate descendant Seth ; yet before the decease of this last, the miraculous translation of Enoch took place, and yielded no small assurance, that those who pleased God might obtain a release from the fatal sentence ; arguing on which, those who then continued to serve the Lord, and look for His salvation, drew no far-fetched inference, if they concluded, that the triumph of the promised seed over the serpent would be attended with the glorious consequence of delivering His brethren from the curse of death. The traditional belief of another life
after

after this, prevalent among all the nations SERM.
of antiquity, tends to confirm the idea, that VI.
such was the faith delivered by their com-
mon ancestor Noah, who had been a preacher
of righteousness before the flood : and what
St. Paul says of the patriarchs looking for
an heavenly country, tends to confirm the
same. Though then, indeed, we know the
nature of the salvation had been consider-
ably explained ; because, after Abraham
had been called by God, and received the
promise, that in his seed all the nations of
the earth should be blessed, so extensive was
the information he received of the future
blessing, that our Lord hath said, “ Abra-
ham saw his day, and was glad ;” and St.
Paul, that he received Isaac, (who, as the
child of promise, naturally formed a type
of the true promised seed, yet could not, by
his father, be mistaken for him, since, in
the account the Lord was pleased to give
him of his posterity, he had postponed the
appearance of that blessing till after their
getting possession of the land of Canaan)

SERM. St. Paul, I say, declares, that he received
VI. Isaac in a figure from the dead.

In the blessing too, which Jacob pronounced over his sons on his death-bed, we find a strong and remarkable proof of that patriarch's faith. After declaring that Dan should be a serpent in the way, he exclaimed, "I have waited for thy salvation, O Lord!" For how could the thought of a serpent biting an horse's heel, and throwing his rider to the ground, bring to the recollection of Israel the salvation for which he had been waiting, unless the idea of a serpent was, by some way or other, inseparably connected with that salvation? and how can such a connection be so easily and naturally accounted for, as by allowing, that he alluded to the divine promise, that a descendant of his should bruise *the* serpent's head? And already had he, in the blessing of Judah, spoken of this seed; declaring, that his should not cease to be a ruling tribe until the Giver of peace (for such is the meaning

meaning of the word written in our Bibles, SERM.
Shiloh) should come: "the sceptre shall VI.
not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from
between his feet until Shiloh come." Gen.
xlix. 10. It is, moreover, worthy of ob-
servation, that when Jacob thus said, that
he had waited for the salvation of the Lord,
he uttered no complaint, as if he feared
that he had finally missed of it, although
he was then on his death-bed: a most
pregnant proof this that the deliverance he
looked for was not a temporal one, nay,
certainly contained in it a rescue from the
grave.

Thus, then, stood the belief of the faith-
ful, the extent of the promise, and descrip-
tion of him by whom it was to be ful-
filled, before the giving of the Jewish law
by Moses. Their hopes contained the first
wish of the human heart, immortality.
The authour of this, it was now ascertained,
was to come of the seed of Jacob, of the
tribe of Judah; and as the tokens of his
person had hitherto been encreased, in pro-
portion

SERM. portion to the additional disclosures made
VI. of the benefits He was to obtain for men,
so encrease of light continued to be given
equally on these two points; that as they
became more interested in His appearance,
they might be more strongly secured from
any mistakes concerning it. The sacrifice
of the Lamb at the passover, all the par-
takers of which were saved from the de-
struction which the angel of the Lord dealt
around them, afforded a type to which no
one could correspond, who was not slain
without having a bone of him broken: and
when in the wilderness, the people expressed
their terrour at the fearful scene exhibited
on mount Sinai, and begged, that God
would not again speak with them, lest
they should die; in the promise then
given that the Lord would raise them up a
prophet from among their brethren like
unto Moses, in whose mouth he would put
his words, and who should speak unto them
all that he should command them; while
another particular in the character of the
great Deliverer was given, that He should
be

be a teacher ; the attendant circumstances **SERM.**
expressed, that He should be like unto **VI.**
Moses, and should speak in the name of
God, so limited the description, that no one
could ever answer it but Jesus of Nazareth
Himself. He, indeed, resembled Moses in
escaping in His infancy from the cruel
hands of a sanguinary tyrant. He resem-
bled him in being forty days fasting in the
wilderness ere he delivered the words of the
Lord to the people. He resembled him in
giving with authority a set of command-
ments to the people, assuming to himself,
both by the place from which He spake, a
mountain, and by the style He used, " But
I say unto you," the character and autho-
rity of that prophet, like Moses, who it
was declared should come into the world ;
and, lastly, (for to go through all the par-
ticulars of resemblance by no means belongs
to a discourse like this) He resembled him,
in miraculously giving bread to the multi-
tude in the desert, when, with only five
barley loaves, and two small fishes, he fed
five thousand men, who yet left twelve

SERM. baskets full of fragments. But in this
VI. miracle, indeed, the people themselves discerned the resemblance, and acknowledged it, by affirming, that He of a truth was the long-expected Prophet.

The other circumstance expressed in the description of this prophet was, that He should speak in the name of God ; and a very little attention to the words of our Lord will manifest the accurate correspondence that existed between His mode of teaching, and this previous account of it. He seems, indeed, purposely to have stated to His hearers, that all He did, or said, was in His Father's name ; thus pointing out to them the distinction between Himself and those who falsely pretended to the character of the Christ, and leading them to the inference, that He was the person spoken of by Moses in the law. Hear Him declaring to the Jews, " My doctrine is not mine, but His that sent me." And " I came down from Heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of Him that sent

sent me." Again: "the works that I do SERM.
in my Father's name, they bear witness of VI.
me." And, lastly, "I am come in my
Father's name, and ye receive me not: if
another shall come in his own name, him
ye will receive." In the discourse accom-
panying which rebuke, He exhorted them
to search the Scriptures for testimony of
Him, thus pointing out to them a charac-
teristick which they could not have failed
to have discerned, had they but discharged
their duty.

As we proceed in our investigation of the
particulars of the then future salvation re-
vealed in the law, we find strong suggestions
of the necessity of sacrifice and atonement
to be made for sins; yet those openly ap-
pointed, the blood of bulls, and that of
goats, were evidently unequal to the end;
though they still taught the divine accept-
ance of vicarious sacrifice. Hence the
minds of the thoughtful part of the Israelites
(and many such there must have been in the
schools of their prophets, whose business
it

SERM. VI. it was to teach the people what they themselves discovered) were naturally prepared to receive and comprehend those declarations which, in course of time, the prophets Isaiah and Jeremiah delivered concerning the Messiah's being cut off for the sins of the people. But as this very important part of the office of the Saviour began to be more clearly seen, it was fit that still more particular testimony should be given of His person and actions, such as could not possibly be applied to any other that might appear; and this was most admirably done, first, by such things being foretold of His sufferings as no one would like to have fulfilled in himself; and, secondly, by ascribing to Him such acts as could not be performed without the divine patronage; while other circumstances, not in any man's power to command with regard to himself, were added, to encrease the notoriety of His person. As these last were to happen first, in order of time, let me *first* call *them* to your recollection.

The

The absurdest enemy of the Gospel will SERM.
not dispute, that it is out of any man's VI.
power to contrive of what family he shall
be born ; yet the stock from which the pro-
mised seed was, according to the flesh, to
descend, was limited not only, as I have
before noticed, to the tribe of Judah, but
to the line of Jesse, and even within that,
to the particular family of his youngest
son David. “ And there shall come forth
(proclaims Isaiah) a rod out of the stem of
Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his
roots, and the spirit of the Lord shall rest
upon him, the spirit of wisdom and under-
standing, the spirit of counsel and might,
the spirit of knowledge, and of the fear of
the Lord : and shall make him of quick
understanding in the fear of the Lord : and
He shall not judge after the sight of His
eye, neither reprove after the hearing of
His ears, but with righteousness shall He
judge the poor, and reprove with equity
for the meek of the earth : and He shall
smite the earth with the rod of His mouth,
and with the breath of His lips shall He
slay

SERM. VI. slay the wicked : and righteousness shall be the girdle of His loins, and faithfulness the girdle of His reins." And, in a still higher strain : " For unto us a Child is born ; unto us a Son is given ; and the government shall be upon His shoulder ; and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace. Of the increase of His government and peace, there shall be no end ; upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment, and with justice, from henceforth even for ever." (Isaiah ix. 6, 7.) Observe too the words of Jeremiah. " Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous branch, and a king shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. In His days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely : and this is His name whereby He shall be called, the Lord, our Righteousness." (Jer. xxiii. 5, 6.)

But

But in this last text the promised seed is SERM.
VI.
spoken of in a character in which He has not yet appeared in this discourse, that of the Deliverer of the people of Israel in a more especial manner. “In His days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely.” This particular, which is enlarged on in many other passages of the prophets, naturally attracted the principal attention of the Jews themselves, and made them watchful for every symptom of the promised appearance of their Saviour. Neither should it seem strange that the Redeemer of the human race should prove, in a more particular manner, a blessing to the stock from whence He sprung. Those who live nearest the sun naturally enjoy the greatest share of its benign influence, while such as are removed to a greater distance, have sufficient reason to be thankful for, and rejoice in the light and warmth they receive from it. And the family of Israel being, for their father’s sake, chosen to be the instruments of such a blessing to the world, justly gives them the precedence of all the sons of men; and
though

SERM. though there be no respect of persons with
 VI. God, yet as the punishment for evil, so
 “ the glory, honour, and peace, given to
 every man that worketh good, shall be to
 the Jew *first*, though also to the Gentile.”

To the above, of being born of the house of David, was added, by the spirit of prophecy, another circumstance, not only extraordinary, nor merely singular, but very miraculous; that the same great person should be born of a virgin. “ Therefore the Lord Himself shall give you a sign: Behold a *virgin* shall conceive, and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel.” (Is. vii. 14.) Known unto God are all His works from the beginning; and, in mercy to the sons of men, He hath borne a kind of double testimony to some of those which are the most extraordinary; that the natural improbability of the thing on one side might be counterbalanced by the weight of evidence on the other. Thus, when the future victory over the serpent was promised at the fall, by the title of the seed of woman.

woman in particular, being given to Him **SERM.**
who was to obtain it, it was suggested that **VI.**
something peculiar would attend the birth
of the Great Deliverer ; but what that was
remained concealed among the mysteries of
the kingdom of Heaven, at least till these
words of Isaiah explained it, by testifying
that the Messiah should be so peculiarly the
seed of woman only, as to be born of a
virgin.

The accomplishment of these two predictions in the person of Jesus of Nazareth, is related to us by the evangelists Matthew and Luke, in passages too well known to need repetition, as well as that of His being born in Bethlehem of Judah, the prophecy only of which I shall therefore now repeat to you ; it is written in the second verse of the fifth chapter of the prophet Micah.
“ But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall He come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel : whose goings forth have been from old, from everlasting.”

SERM. lasting." Observe here, likewise, a reference to the antiquity of the promise of this great person's coming, "whose goings forth have been from old." For incidental passages like this, though often overlooked, serve to connect the different parts of revelation, and preserve the unity of Scripture, and thus suggest to the reader, that however long (as we count long) a course of time it may require to perfect it, the dispensation carrying on for human redemption is but one, which commenced as soon as the race stand in need of redemption, and will end only when they are delivered from the last enemy that shall be destroyed, which is Death.

The prophetick characteristicks of the Messiah which I proposed next to consider, were those sufferings which it was foretold He should undergo, and to which no one, conscious of being an impostor, would willingly have subjected himself for the chance of success. In the twenty-second psalm, David in spirit described the very scene

scene which took place at the crucifixion. **SERM.**

“ All they that see me, laugh me to scorn: **VI.**

they shoot out the lip, they shake the head, saying, He trusted in the Lord, that He would deliver Him : let Him deliver Him, seeing He delighted in Him.” And a few verses after, “ My strength is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue cleaveth to my jaws ; and Thou hast brought me into the dust of death. For dogs have compassed me : the assembly of the wicked have inclosed me : they pierced my hands and my feet. I may tell all my bones : they look and stare upon me. They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture.” A part of the indignities our Lord suffered during His passion, was thus foretold by the prophet Micah ; “ They shall smite the Judge of Israel with a rod upon the cheek.” (Mic. v. 1.) But the fullest and clearest account of what this great Person was to undergo, together with the reason of His being subjected, though without offence, to such afflictions, was given by Isaiah : an account, indeed, con-

SERM. taining circumstances which it was naturally
VI. and utterly impossible should be all accom-
plished but in the very Person appointed by
God to redeem our fallen race. “ Who
(saith this prophet, in his fifty-third chap-
ter) hath believed our report ? and to whom
is the arm of the Lord revealed ? ” Thus
pointedly does he mark the appearance of
this subject of all prophecy, as contrary to
that which his countrymen would expect :
He was not to shew Himself to Israel as a
powerful prince, as a mighty warriour, but
as the righteous servant of that God, whose
strength is perfected in weakness. Even
men can sometimes do great things by great
means ; but it is the prerogative of the
Almighty to effect great purposes by in-
struments otherwise totally inadequate to
them ; and when in these we discern not
the divine operation, to us the arm of the
Lord is not revealed, as it was not to those
who scorned Jesus for the meanness of His
appearance, though the prediction conti-
nued, “ For He shall grow up before
Him as a tender plant, and as a root out of
a dry

a dry ground. He is despised and rejected SERM.
of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted VI.
with grief: and we hid, as it were, our
faces from Him: He was despised, and we
esteemed Him not."

After this description of our Saviour's reception, so accurately fulfilled in the treatment He met with from the Jews, the prophet proceeds to assign the reason of His being thus exposed to ill usage. "Surely He hath borne our griefs, and carried *our* sorrows; yet we did esteem Him smitten of God and afflicted: but He was wounded for *our* transgressions; he was bruised for *our* iniquities: the chastisement of *our* peace was upon Him; and with *His* stripes *we* are healed. All *we*, like sheep, have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on *Him* the iniquity of us all."

But there yet remained to be announced the chief thing which it behoved the Christ to suffer, ere He could enter into His glory: the types of the law could not be fulfilled,

SERM. VI. the promised victory over the serpent could not be perfect, till the sentence he had brought on our first parents, by his victory over them, was done away; and captivity itself was led captive, by the promised seed's treading death under foot, and returning in triumph from the grave. But to ascend He must first descend, and therefore the prophet goes on. "He was oppressed, and He was afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth, (either to murmur, or to call for assistance which yet He told Peter He had but to pray for, and would receive.) He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he opened not His mouth. He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare His generation? (that is, who will stand forth in that day, and acknowledge that he knows him?) For He was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was He stricken."

The sacrifice thus offered, what remained to complete the work of human redemption,

tion, but an incontrovertible assurance, that SERM.
God vouchsafed to accept the atonement? VI.

After mentioning his burial, therefore, the prophet proceeds: "When thou shalt make His soul an offering for sin, He shall see His seed, He shall prolong His days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His hand. He shall see the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many, for He shall bear their iniquities. Therefore will I divide Him a portion with the great, and He shall divide the spoil with the strong, because He hath poured out His soul unto death: and He was numbered with the transgressors; and He bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors."

Here at length behold those circumstances which I affirmed it was naturally and utterly impossible should be accomplished but in the very person appointed by God to redeem our fallen race. The Messiah, as you see, was not only to be cut off

SERM. for the sins of the people, but after He had
VI. poured His soul out unto death, He was to
justify many ; and to divide a portion with
the great, and the spoil with the strong.
Now as the former of these circumstances,
that of being slain, was in itself such as
scarcely any pretender to the character would
wish to have verified in his own person,
because it would at once cut off all the
happiness he might have promised to him-
self from his success, so had so mad a love
of fame seized any one as to make him
willing to lay down his life, under the hope
of giving lasting credit to his imposture,
yet the latter circumstance, that of return-
ing from the dead, he must let alone for
ever.

Here, then, was a characteristick ap-
pointed for the Christ, which could not
possibly be assumed, while by requiring the
interference of Him, to whom the sacrifice
was offered, it proved, that He had ac-
cepted it ; and fully justified the sons of
men in believing, that a sufficient atonement
was

was made for their sins by Him who had SERM.
risen from the dead.

VI.

After thus mentioning our Lord's resurrection as a proof of His truth, it may seem needless to dwell on the testimony resulting from His other miracles ; I will not, therefore, detain you to hear any observation on these now ; but in my next discourse I shall call your attention to them, chiefly with a view to shew you the frivolousness of those objections which infidels, either ancient or modern, have made unto them.

In the mean time, let the importance of what has this day been stated unto you, sink deep into your hearts ; for, be assured, that after God hath borne such witness to His Son, He will require it of every man, who wilfully shuts his eyes against it, or even carelessly disregards it. Ye have seen that His salvation was promised from the beginning of the world ; that the particulars of it were gradually unfolded ; and the characteristicks of the great Person who

SERM. was to accomplish it, as gradually revealed.

VI.  Ye have seen, too, that these last were too numerous to be likely to meet in more than one person, and some of them too nice to be possibly found in any but Him, for whom they were intended. For He must not only be the seed of the woman in a peculiar sense, but a descendant of Abraham, through the line of Isaac, Israel, Judah, and David, born at Bethlehem, a teacher and prophet like unto Moses, speaking in the name of the Lord, yet rejected by his own nation, afflicted, buffeted, led to publick execution with malefactors, and under the scoff of his countrymen, put to an ignominious death, yet, after all, rising again in triumph from the grave. Now, if this be He to whom all the ends of the earth are to look for salvation, what honest enquirer can be at a loss to discover Him? For who but Jesus of Nazareth not only ever bare, but ever pretended to all these characteristicks? He, indeed, foretold His own sufferings and death as necessary circumstances in proof of His being the Messiah; and suffered what
He

He foretold. He likewise burst the bonds **SERM.**
of death, and having ascended into Heaven, **VI.**
gave His disciples power from on high to
preach that gospel whose sound is gone forth
into all nations, informing them, that the
promise which God made unto the fathers,
He hath indeed fulfilled the same, in that He
hath raised up Jesus from the dead; and we,
through their words, are now acquainted
with those things which many kings and
prophets have desired to see, but have not
seen them; wherefore (we ought in com-
mon sense to ask ourselves) “ How shall
we escape, if we neglect so great salvation,
which at first began to be spoken by the
Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them
that heard Him, God also bearing them wit-
ness both with signs and wonders, and with
divers miracles and gifts of the Holy Ghost,
according to His own will.”

The Council of Trent, the last of the general councils of the Roman Church, was held in the city of Trent in the year 1545, and continued for sixteen years. It was convened by Pope Paul III. in the first year of his pontificate, and was the last of a series of councils which had been held at intervals of about twenty years, since the Council of Nice in the year 325. The Council of Trent was the last of the general councils of the Roman Church, and it was the last of a series of councils which had been held at intervals of about twenty years, since the Council of Nice in the year 325. The Council of Trent was the last of the general councils of the Roman Church, and it was the last of a series of councils which had been held at intervals of about twenty years, since the Council of Nice in the year 325.

SERMON VII.

ON THE MIRACLES OF OUR LORD.

HEBREWS II. 3, 4.

How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation, which at first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard Him; God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to His own will.

THERE is nothing on account of which the Gospel has been more objected to, than the speculative difficulties that attend on some of its most important doctrines; against these the serious infidel directs his arguments; these the scoffing blasphemer makes the subjects of his jokes. But the
argu-

SERM.
VII.

SERM. arguments of the one, and the jests of the
VII. other, must be equally vain and ill-grounded,
if such difficulties were really to have been
expected in a revelation: and that they
were so, appears from the nature of revelation
itself, which is a discovery of the
councils and designs of God, as far as man
is interested therein, or as his conduct ought
to be influenced thereby: for it is not reasonable
to suppose, that we can fully comprehend
the dispensations of that Being, who, by his
unbounded knowledge, foresees, and, by His
infinite wisdom, provides, against every
circumstance of every case.

This, perhaps, ye will allow, but still
wish to reply, that no part of the councils
of the Almighty, of which we cannot see,
and clearly comprehend all the reasons,
ought to have a share in a revelation made to
us. Were we required to fully understand,
or clearly explain the difficulties complained
of, this opinion would be just; but the
doctrines on which they attend, are not
proposed as subjects of speculation, but as
objects

jects of faith, to be received on the authority of their Authour. How far it may be proper to make trial of our reliance on God, He himself who formed us is, surely, much abler to judge than we are: and since we have no natural right to that happiness of which He makes us an offer in the Gospel; if the conditions on which it is offered are such as we can perform, we cannot have any cause to murmur at them.

SERM.

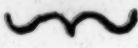
VII.

The proper subject of consideration therefore is, whether there be good ground for the faith required. Now the word of God, if that has indeed been given, must be unexceptionable. Here then, at length, arises the material question, Whether God hath really spoken? or, in other words, the evidence of revelation appears to be the true subject of enquiry.

To this, then, let us turn our thoughts, and take a view of it in the manner suggested by the text; first weighing the proofs, which our Lord His self gave of His

SERM. His own divine commission and authority,
VII. and then examining with what fidelity they
~~~~~ have been handed down to us : for, by  
these means, we shall be enabled to deter-  
mine, " whether we have hitherto followed  
only cunningly devised fables," or may (as  
we boast) justly glory in holding the Gospel  
of the living God.

1. Our Lord, as He his self hath told  
us, was not sent, but to the lost sheep of  
the house of Israel ; that is, the offer of  
salvation through Him, as it had been par-  
ticularly promised, was first to be made to  
the posterity of Jacob. On this account  
did Christ confine His own preaching, and  
that of His disciples, until after the ascen-  
sion to the Jewish nation ; and accordingly,  
the evidence given before that period, was  
such as was particularly fit to be offered to  
the Israelites. They had been taught, as  
has already been stated to you, even from  
the day in which they were separated from  
the other nations to be the peculiar people  
of God, to expect a person, under the several  
characters,

characters, of the promised seed, the great **SERM.**  
prophet, and the Messiah, who should teach **VII.**  
them the perfect will of God, and whom,   
on that account, they were commanded to  
obey. The time of this extraordinary per-  
son's appearance, the city in which He  
should be born, His manner of life, and  
His mighty works, were particularly de-  
scribed, and much dwelt on, by the chief  
among their prophets; to the writings of  
these, therefore, our Lord perpetually ap-  
pealed for the truth of his pretensions to  
divine mission. "Search the prophets, said  
He, for in them ye think ye have eternal  
life, and they are they which testify of  
Me." A fairer trial could not have been  
proposed. "You acknowledge that the  
prophets spake by the Spirit of God; they  
have left you the surest notes by which to  
discover the Messiah; I am that Person;  
enquire, and see if all the circumstances of  
my birth, life, and actions, do not corres-  
pond with their descriptions." To a Jew,  
who accepting this exhortation, discovered,  
that to Jesus gave all the prophets witness;  
there

SERM. there was no further proof wanting of His  
VII. being sent from God : and even with any  
impartial enquirer, these things must have  
no small weight ; since it being once shewn  
that He is the Christ spoken of in the law  
and the prophets, all the works done by the  
last, and all the miracles wrought at the  
giving, and in support of the first, become  
testimony in favour of Him : for every proof  
of their truth must be one of *His* of whom  
they testified.

But I mean not to dwell longer on this  
part of the evidence : there are other proofs  
still more direct, to which, as proposed in  
the last discourse, I must now call your at-  
tention. The works which our Saviour  
did, testified that the Father had sent Him,  
since they were such as no man could do  
unless God had been with Him. To heal  
the sick at a word, to open the eyes of the  
blind, to unstop the ears of the deaf, and  
to raise the dead, are works which the ut-  
most stretch of human power and art cannot  
accomplish. In doing these and such like,  
for



for the benefit of mankind, did Christ spend **SERM.**  
his life. Yet it was his lot then, and still **VII.**  
is, to have the reality of his works ques-  
tioned, and be Himself blasphemed. And  
although every objection that has arisen  
from the publication of the Gospel, even  
to the present age, hath been repeatedly an-  
swered, so perverse is infidelity, so obstinate  
are her patrons and supporters, that the very  
same exceptions which, we read in the  
history of our Saviour's life, were made by  
the Jews, and immediately refuted, are still  
insisted on as unanswered and unanswerable.  
Thus do we mention the works which Jesus  
did, as sufficiently proving, that He was  
commissioned from on high. It is urged,  
on the contrary, that they were not really  
done, but were only the effects of juggle  
and conspiracy: the person declared to have  
been healed, is supposed to have feigned  
himself sick, and, at the word given, to  
have shewn himself whole as he was in  
truth before.

SERM.

VII.

But blessed be God, who hath not left the impartial enquirer to wander in darkness, and in doubt. The subjects which our Lord chose for his miracles, and the places and company in which He did them, not only take away all ground for suspicion, but render such suppositions absolutely absurd. His works were commonly wrought, in the most public places, the streets, the synagogues, and the temple, before the multitudes, and subject to the inspection of his most able and inveterate enemies, the chief priests and Pharisees. These too, it seems, had once taken up the abovementioned opinion, and when they were informed that Jesus had given sight to a man born blind, they doubted whether he had ever been blind, until calling his parents, and questioning them, they confirmed the report of their son's having been born blind, but were, at the same time, so little inclined to favour our Lord in their evidence, that they would not assert, how he had obtained his sight. In this case the reality of the miracle appeared beyond dispute: that

the man then saw, was plain: that he had SERM.  
been blind, all the neighbours, and those VII.  
who had seen him sitting by the way-side,  
and begging, bore witness: that his blind-  
ness could not have been feigned, on agree-  
ment with Christ, was evident, from his  
having suffered under it even from his  
birth.

The incontestable greatness of this and  
other miracles, which our Lord wrought,  
at length drew from those who had the best  
opportunities of judging, and were most  
backward to acknowledge them, a formal  
confession of their reality. When the chief  
priests and Pharisees being assembled in  
council, said, "What do we? for this man  
doeth many miracles: if we let Him alone,  
all men will believe on Him; and the Ro-  
mans will come, and take away both our  
place and our nation." If, after this ac-  
knowledgment, made by his most violent  
and obstinate opposers, on the spot, and  
while He was yet working among them,  
any thing can be added to heighten the



absurdity of the supposition, it is the nature of some of his miracles. Thus, for instance, when our Lord fed four thousand men, beside women and children, with seven loaves, and a few small fishes, and there remained of the fragments seven baskets full; and when He fed the five thousand with five loaves and two fishes, and there remained twelve baskets full of fragments—had the miracles not been wrought, the whole multitude must have conspired together to defraud their own stomachs, and deceive the world. Again, when Christ rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, “Peace, be still,” and there was a great calm, shall we suppose that the elements were in conspiracy with Him? that they had agreed to be obedient to his word? But however it came to pass that they did obey Him, let it be remembered, that since different parts of nature thus conspired, do declare his power, and shew forth his praise, we have partly the same evidence of his greatness and authority as we have of the being and attributes of God.

But

But here it is replied, “ that even if Jesus wrought, by his word, such miracles as no human power could perform, yet it by no means immediately follows, that He was empowered by God to do them. There may be other invisible beings, the extent of whose power we know not; nay, whose invisibility only would make their actions appear miraculous to men. By such He might have been assisted, and then we cannot know assuredly whether, instead of God, an evil being was not the authour of our religion.

This objection too, is almost coeval with the Gospel; for when there was brought unto our Lord a dumb man, possessed with the devil, and He cast out the devil, and the dumb spake, the Pharisees said, He casteth out devils, through the prince of the devils. The reply which Christ then made is well worthy of attention, as it furnishes us with the proper answer to every thing of the kind. In it, He first sets forth the absurdity of imagining, that an

SERM. evil being would exert himself for the destruction of evil. “ If a kingdom be divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand; and if an house be divided against itself, that house cannot stand: and if Satan rise up against himself, and be divided, he cannot stand, but hath an end;” and then represented the absolute necessity there was of admitting, that He His self was assisted by a power superiour to that of all evil beings, since otherwise He could not have exercised such authority over them. “ No man, said He, can enter into a strong man’s house, and spoil his goods, except he first bind the strong man, and then he shall spoil his house.”

When men wish to get rid of a doctrine which militates against their prejudices, or condemns their practice, there is scarcely any inconsistency too great for them to be guilty of. Thus the Jews, rather than acknowledge Jesus to be a prophet sent from God, could suppose, that the Devil would interpose in the cause of religion and virtue,  
and



and exert his power to incite men to the SERM.  
worship of their Creatour, and the practice VII.  
of their duty towards each other. And  
thus, too, the infidel of our own times would  
ascribe the miracles of Christ to any power  
but that of God, in whose name they were  
wrought; not considering that, as their  
tendency to promote true religion over-  
throws every supposition of their proceed-  
ing from an evil being, so our Lord's de-  
claration, that He worked by the power of  
God, is an insuperable bar to imagining  
that they were done with the assistance of  
any other good being, since such an one  
would never have supported a falsity. And  
repeated falsities, of the most impious kind,  
must Jesus have uttered, if He was not sent  
into the world by the Father, and did not  
act under his commission and authority.

But, lastly, to the evidence of a divine  
commission given by our Lord, before his  
crucifixion, must be added, the astonishing  
miracle of his resurrection; a miracle which,  
the more accurately it is considered, the

SERM. more fully does it appear to prove, that He  
VII. was, of a truth, the Son of God. As long  
as life remains, a man may, by the assistance of art and wisdom merely human, do much in eluding the power, and baffling the attempts, of his enemies; but if once he give their vengeance full scope, and submit to suffer all that they can inflict, it is plain no earthly power can then restore him: yet this was the case of our Lord. He yielded, without resistance, to the violence of the Jews, and gave himself so perfectly into their power, that they were persuaded, nothing but the divine interposition could rescue Him. "If thou be the Son of God," said they, "come down from the cross. He trusted in God; let Him deliver Him now, if He will have Him." Had Jesus accepted this challenge, and, in the presence of the multitude, descended from the cross, that, I conceive, it will be owned, would have been giving a sure proof of his own greatness, and of his enjoying the favour and protection of Him, who he said was his Father. Why may He not, then, be  
justly

justly thought to have given such, when, **SERM.**  
after having permitted human malice to do **VII.**  
its utmost, and poured out his soul unto  
death, under the hands of his persecutors,  
He shewed the inefficacy of even this their  
last efforts to crush Him, and rose again in  
triumph from the grave! That the testi-  
mony of the truth of Jesus, afforded by  
this event, is decisive, we learn from the  
unbelievers themselves, who do not pretend  
to argue on this as on some other facts re-  
corded, but are obliged to have recourse at  
once to an absolute denial of it. How un-  
reasonably, and in opposition to what a  
cloud of witnesses they do deny it, must  
be considered at some future opportunity.  
At present it remains only for me to exhort  
you to retain in your minds those truths re-  
lating to the miracles of our Saviour, which  
have been now set before you.

Ye have seen that the examination which  
his works underwent, as well as the nature  
of some of them, fully evinces, that they  
were not the effects of slight and conspi-  
racy :



SERM. racy ; that mere unassisted man was not the  
VII. authour of them, their greatness declares.

~ The ends for which they were wrought, render it unreasonable to ascribe them to any evil being ; and the claim which Jesus founded on them, excludes the interposition of any others but the Deity Himself. To His interposition, therefore, let them be ascribed ; and if, on no other account, at least on this, that his justice and mercy are pledged for the truth of Jesus. If you doubt in what manner they can stand engaged, consider, that those who first embraced the Gospel (whatever may be the character of its present professors) were undoubtedly in earnest ; they renounced all that was most dear and valuable to them in this world, in obedience to what they thought was the will of God. The ground on which they believed it to be so, was the evidence given of the revelation, which, as we have already seen, was such as fully justified their faith. But if Jesus was an impostor, what shall we say of God's permitting Him to work such miracles as led his

his own most faithful servants into an error **SERM.**  
absolutely invincible in itself, and destruc- **VII.**  
tive in its consequences? Can it be thought  
any way consistent with the character of the  
Governour of the universe, to suffer the  
greatest testimony of His own interposition  
(I mean, works similar to those of creation)  
to be forged beyond a possibility of detec-  
tion, for the purpose of depriving those  
men who were most sincerely devoted to his  
service, of all ease and happiness in this  
life, with vain and delusive hopes of ano-  
ther? No, before we admit this, we must  
disbelieve the providence and moral attri-  
butes of God, and though, within our-  
selves imagining, perhaps, that we hold  
the religion of reason and nature, in fact  
deny what reason can demonstrate, and what  
nature declares through all her works.





## SERMON VIII.

ON THE TESTIMONY OF THE APOSTLES.

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HEB. II. 3, 4.

*How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation which at first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard Him; God also bearing them witness both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?*

**I**N a former discourse on these words, it SERM.  
VIII.  
was proposed to enquire into evidence which we have for the truth of christianity, in the manner suggested by the text; first weighing the proofs which our Lord Himself gave of his divine commission, and then examining with what fidelity those proofs have

SERM. have been handed down to us. In the  
VIII. course of our enquiry at that time, it ap-  
peared that the miracles of Christ were so  
great, wrought in such a manner, and for  
such purposes, that they could not, with  
the least shadow of reason, be ascribed to  
any other cause than the divine interposition  
itself; it now remains to consider, what  
degree of credit is due to the accounts  
which we at present have of them;  
since, after we have proved that the works  
of our Saviour, if wrought as related, must  
have proceeded from the power of God;  
the relation itself may still be called in ques-  
tion, and we may be asked, Whether "that  
was not feigned only to impose on mankind,  
and serve the purposes of the reporters?"

To discover, then, whether any suspicions  
of this sort can be justly entertained, let us  
enquire, "What advantage those who first  
published the Gospel to the world, after the  
death of Jesus, could possibly have proposed  
to themselves, in uttering and maintaining  
the things they preached, had they been  
false?"

false?" For it is not to be *presumed*, that any men would invent, report, and continue obstinate in affirming a string of falsities, without hopes of gaining some advantage to themselves thereby. But what did the apostles and immediate disciples of Christ report unto the world? Why, "that God had raised up Jesus from the dead, and made Him both Lord and Christ;" and "that He hath appointed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness, by that man whom He hath ordained, whereof He hath given assurance unto all men, in that He hath raised Him from the dead, of which resurrection they were witnesses." Such was their doctrine! Consider it on all sides, and name one temporal advantage which ye imagine they could possibly promise themselves in preaching it. The nation which they first addressed, had already persecuted their Master unto death; and the heads of it had left nothing unattempted to ruin his credit with the people. Under these circumstances, what hope could they entertain, that this extraordinary report

SERM.  
VIII.  
con-



SERM. concerning Him who had been crucified  
VIII. would be listened to? Or could they imagine, that those who had slain the Master, would not have both power and inclination to destroy the disciples, who thus daringly accused them of the murder of not only an innocent person, but of a prophet sent from God?

To these questions, your imaginations may, perhaps, suggest various answers, and ye may seem to descry several probable motives for their conduct; but since, in our searches after truth, we must not be led away by fancy, but guided by facts, no motive can be here admitted as the true one but what is consistent with the inference which the disciples themselves drew from their doctrine: And what was that? That they were to have publick honours paid them; or were to be maintained by their converts in ease and affluence? By no means, but “that the people should repent, and be baptized, that their sins might be blotted out.” And as this inference betrayed no selfish

selfish design, so neither did their conduct ; **SERM.**  
since we afterwards find the apostles labour- **VIII.**  
ing more abundantly than the rest, suffering  
the most violent persecutions, and passing  
through the greatest perils ; and one, He  
too by no means the least among them, ac-  
quiring his necessary support even by ma-  
nual labour. To wish to be distinguished  
by sufferings, to be desirous of surpassing  
others in misery, is a strange ambition ; and  
yet, if the apostles of Christ were prompted  
by any other than that of gaining a place  
in the kingdom of Heaven, it must have  
been of this kind : they put themselves at  
the head of a sect which promised, from  
the first, to suffer under the hatred and en-  
mity of the world : of this they very plainly  
were conscious, and they clearly foresaw  
the evils which awaited them, but they  
foresaw them with firmness, and at length  
endured them with patience.

Neither was this their patience under their  
sufferings merely the effect of stratagem, for  
then it would have been temporary ; and as

SERM. the number of their followers, and consequently the power of their party encreased, they would have endeavoured to extricate themselves from them: but, on the contrary, when they had numerous converts in every city, and even in the capital of the empire; when their doctrines had spread into the court and into the camp, they still taught the same lessons of meekness and forbearance, still commanded submission and obedience to be paid to the civil magistrate: nay, what is more, what is an irrefragable proof of their sincerity, their example still kept pace with their exhortations, they themselves all along suffered without resistance, and, *as* they began their ministry under the scourge, *so* they ended it on the cross.

It must not, however, be dissembled, that in reply to this proof of the sincerity of the apostles, our adversaries produce instances of others who have suffered with equal constancy in support of what they taught; “ and if it be evident from fact, that some have



have willingly met death in the cause of falsehood, why may not others have done so too." The objection, indeed, is specious, but if thoroughly examined, it will be found to have but little weight; many of those who have laid down their lives for their tenets, have joined the pursuit of temporal goods with that of spiritual, and have tried the fortune of arms, before they have submitted to death; others have been of sects too weak and inconsiderable, to make even a show of resistance; and all have died under a conviction that they suffered for the truth. That the two first cases are inadequate to that of the Apostles, has been already shewn; and with regard to the last mentioned circumstance, it should be observed; that their doctrines were founded on facts of which they pretended to have been eye-witnesses; so that had these their pretensions been false, they must have died conscious of having maintained the most blasphemous untruths. Hopes of reward, therefore, in another state, they could have none; neither could they but have been

SERM. 2

VIII.

SERM. fible, that the little reputation they had  
VIII. gained here would soon be irretrievably lost,  
since their reports of their Master's works  
were such as might easily be examined and  
refuted. Now take away all thoughts of  
another world, and all hopes of establishing  
a lasting reputation in this, and what probable  
motive can ye assign for a man's resigning  
his life in support of his assertions? For as to  
that false shame and sullen obstinacy of which  
the public executions of our own country sometimes  
afford examples, these are inadmissible in the  
other case; since the criminal here must, though  
he confessed his crime, still suffer the sentence  
of the law; the disciple of Christ had only to  
deny his Master; and he was pardoned and released.

Behold then the ground there is for suspecting  
the apostles of forgery and design! They preached  
doctrines which made themselves hated and despised;  
they drew no inferences from them in their own  
favour; and though they might have gained life and  
security by recanting their assertions, they pre-

preferred laying down their lives in support SERM.  
of them, when had they been false, they VIII.  
could have entertained no hopes, either of  
establishing a reputation here, or of gaining  
happiness hereafter.

It is needless, however, to dwell any longer on these circumstances, since there is a single question, the decision of which in our favour, (and that I conceive will readily be given) will prove at once all those suppositions and presumptions so much relied on by our adversaries groundless and absurd. The question is this, "Whether the first preachers of the Gospel, had their reports concerning the mighty works of Jesus been false, could have escaped detection?" and the ground on which I persuade myself it will so readily be resolved in the negative, is the following: The scene of our Saviour's miracles was laid in the cities of Judah and Galilee; they were not said to have been worked in private, but at the great feasts, and in the places whither the Jews always resorted; and lastly, it was



SERM. not at any great distance of time, but within

VIII. two months after the crucifixion of their

Master, that the disciples began publicly to insist on the greatness of his works ; so that to discover whether their relation were true was by no means a work of difficulty ; for unless many of the people could bear them witness, they were by their own confession to be esteemed false ; and that there were numbers who would not let the matter pass without a severe scrutiny, no one can doubt who considers, that to make this was equally the interest of both those who received and those who rejected the new doctrine. The first staked all they had in this world for it's truth ; the others, all their hopes of futurity and real happiness against it. Neither was the reason of men alone concerned in the decision ; their passions also were strongly interested. The apostles of Christ openly attacked not only some of the most favourite traditions of the most prejudiced nation on earth, but the learning, wisdom, and probity of a sect, to whom the body of that people were entirely

tirely devoted, and who were peculiarly jealous of their own character in relation to each of these; such a sect, thus attacked and exasperated, we might well suppose, even if we had no historical testimony of the fact, left nothing undone that might help to crush the Gospel in it's infancy, and ruin the credit of it's teachers. How much more then, when it is recorded, that the Pharisees proceeded to scourge and imprison the disciples, in order to force them to silence, may we presume that they would not have neglected the more obvious and effectual way of stopping their progress, by proving them propagators of falsehood, had it been in their power to do so?

SERM.

VIII.

Indeed, this presumptive argument for the truth of the apostles, seems the more convincing the more nearly it is viewed; every point of their doctrine, every circumstance of their conduct giving it additional weight. The first account of their Master's miracles was given at Jerusalem before numbers assembled from every part of the country wherein he had passed his life, and to

SERM. these did Peter appeal for the truth of his  
VIII. own report, when He said, “ Ye men of  
“ Israel, Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved  
“ of God among you by miracles and signs  
“ and wonders, which God did by him in  
“ the midst of you, as ye yourselves also  
“ know.” Moreover, the preachers, when  
they began to leave Jerusalem, still confined  
themselves for some time to those parts  
which they had affirmed to be the scene of  
the works of Jesus, affording their enemies  
thereby a still longer space for observation  
and scrutiny. Nay, when they departed  
from Judæa, and went into the distant cities  
of the empire, as if desirous of making  
their reports first to those who were most  
capable of examining their truth, they in  
every city entered into the Synagogues of  
the Jews ; and first preached Christ to  
them, who by the constant communication  
which the law obliged them to preserve  
with Jerusalem, were enabled to make fre-  
quent enquiries after the facts related.

But this openness and plain dealing of  
the immediate disciples of our Lord, in ad-  
dressing



dress<sup>ing</sup> their earliest relations of his mira-  
cles to the Jews, is not the only ground for  
thinking that they could not but have been  
detected had those relations been false ; they  
farther offered the Gentiles such testimony  
of their truth as was most valid if really  
given, while their power to give it might  
be easily known. The testimony I mean is  
that mentioned in the text,—“ Of divers  
miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, by  
which they affirmed God bore witness of their  
truth. Now it is manifest, that in pre-  
tending to these they appealed to the eyes  
and ears of all around them, and what rea-  
son have we for supposing that the Gen-  
tiles of those days were more backward to  
make use of their senses in matters of this  
kind than we are at present ? They certainly  
were not without that natural curiosity  
which leads men eagerly to enquire into all  
extraordinary appearances ; they had their  
prejudices against the doctrines of the Gos-  
pel as well as the Jews ; for if the latter  
could not believe in Christ crucified ; the  
former were as little disposed to credit the

SERM.

VIII.

Re-

**SERM.** Resurrection of the Body. If the Pharisees  
**VIII.** were tenacious of their traditions, the philosophers were no less obstinate in support of their opinions; and lastly, if the Jewish nation were offended at the disciples of Christ for the censures passed on them, the Heathens could be as little pleased at the contempt shewn for their fancied deities, and the rebukes they themselves received for their impurities.

Neither did there reign in that age that darkness and ignorance which in some others have proved so favourable to pious forgeries. It was, on the contrary, like the present, enlightened by the cultivation of literature and science; like the present, it was blessed with the instruction of writers who endeavoured to deliver their cotemporaries from the shackles of superstition, which themselves had broken through. And even if we indulge the unwarrantable supposition, that none of this party—not one of the numberless epicureans dwelling in the different cities, would enquire into the proofs

ptoofs of a doctrine entirely subversive of **SERM.**  
some of their own most favourite tenets, **VIII.**  
and that the teachers, by this unaccountable  
supineness of them without were secured  
from detection that way ; still the frequent  
apostacies there were from the church, even  
in the earliest days, renders it morally im-  
possible that they should have escaped it in  
another. Apostates, we know, are gene-  
rally the most bitter enemies of the doc-  
trines they have deserted : if these men had  
never been witness to the exercise of the mi-  
raculous gifts so much talked of by the  
Christians, would they not, think ye, have  
betrayed the secret ; nay, would they not  
gladly have seized so fair an opportunity of  
justifying their own separation from the  
church by proving it's members guilty of  
impious vanity and bare-faced imposture.  
Yet of such convictions we hear nothing ;  
though St. Paul, in his Epistle to the Church  
of Corinth, in which there were many divi-  
sions, and where his self had several oppo-  
nents, speaks of the prophets, miracles,  
gifts, healings, and diversities of tongues  
which



SERM. which God had given them; though he  
VIII. declares that there had been signs, wonders, and mighty deeds wrought among them by himself; though St. Luke in his Acts of the Apostles, speaks so fully of their miraculous works, yet the enemies of Christianity in the first ages were so far from obtaining any evidence either from those who willingly left, or those who for their vicious lives were turned out of the church, on which to ground a denial of these things, that they took in their opposition to it another course, and ascribed the works of our Lord and his apostles to the power of Magic.

Here then, to conclude, are two questions that await your determination: First, whose word may reasonably be esteemed of the most authority in respect to facts said to have happened seventeen centuries ago—that of the unbelievers of the present age, who contrary to the tenour of history, boldly assert that the immediate disciples of Christ worked no miracles; or that of more  
early

early infidels, who, though equally invete- **SERM.**  
rate against the Gospel, but having much **VIII.**  
better opportunities of gaining accurate in-  
formation concerning it, acknowledge that  
its first preachers did works beyond the  
power of mere unassisted men to perform.  
Secondly. To whom the most credit seems  
in reason due? To those who affirm, that  
*that* Gospel which commands men to for-  
sake idolatry and worship the living God;  
to cease from the commission of impurity  
and cruelty and practise holiness and cha-  
rity, was propagated by the assistance of evil  
beings; or to those who assert, that they  
had a divine commission to preach it, and  
were aided by Heaven in the work? Com-  
mon sense will dictate the proper answer to  
these questions; and they once given, will  
naturally lead you to put to yourselves like-  
wise, that of the text: "How shall we  
" escape if we neglect so great salvation,  
" which at first began to be spoken by the  
" Lord, and was afterwards confirmed unto  
" us by them that heard him; God, also,  
" bearing

**SERM.** "bearing them witness, both with signs

**VIII.** "and wonders, and with divers miracles

~ "and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according

"to his own will."

**SERM.**



## SERMON IX.

ON THE NECESSITY OF REPENTANCE TOWARDS ACCEPTANCE WITH GOD.

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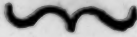
ACTS XX. 21.

*Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance towards God, and Faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ.*

**S**UCH was the sum of the great apostle **SERM.**  
Paul's teaching! The doctrines he was **IX.**  
authorized to promulge in it were full of  
comfort to the human race, fitted to their  
situation, adapted to their wants. When  
the Gospel went forth from Jerusalem, the  
Jews had, by their traditionary figments,  
rendered their law, though given from  
Heaven, of none effect; and the Gentile  
world

SERM. world lay estranged from God, and over-

IX. run with error and impurity. To save  
the former from the impending curse denounced at the giving of their law against all who should forsake it; and to restore the latter to the favour and protection of their Creatour, which they had forfeited by rendering the honour due unto him alone to those who are no Gods, and selling themselves to work all uncleanness with greediness, it was necessary that an alteration should be wrought somewhere. But the Strength of Israel is not a man that he should lie, or that he should repent; the menaces, therefore, pronounced by his authority against the impenitent must have been executed on all who continued such; and as He is also of too pure eyes to behold iniquity, and the perfection of His nature is immutable, it was impossible that His favourable regards should be extended to any who persevered in the practice of Idolatry or impurity; and consequently, among men it was that the change so necessary was to be wrought, by their  
ceasing

ceasing from their evil courses, and be- SERM.  
coming obedient unto God, and holy in IX.  
their lives. 

Here, then, was ground for the apostle to testify both to the Jews and also to the Greeks, the necessity of repentance towards God, and the want of that merciful interposition through which He and his fellow-labourers in the Gospel were sent to preach every where, "that men should repent."

The state of the world manifested the justice of such admonitions: and had any one arisen and urged men to an amendment of their conduct on the common footing of reason, he had fully merited their attention and their thanks. But even had human benevolence been found strong enough in one or two great minds, to prompt to such an attempt, the want of wisdom and power adequate to the work had soon appeared. It was an authoratative call to repentance, supported by a promise of it's favourable acceptance from the Being Him  
VOL. I. N self



SERM. self who was offended, that the world  
IX. needed, and indeed in some measure expected. Such a call to repentance the Gospel contains, and the at first divulging it and its circumstances; and since reminding them thereof, is the chief business of the Ministers of Christ. These great particulars of their preaching let us now consider more distinctly and at large, that we may discover how they are applicable to ourselves.

By repentance, then, has been ever intended a thorough change of mind, not only a sorrow for our past offences, but an aversion from them, and a sincere application of mind to a contrary course. By repentance toward God more especially, a conversion of our souls unto him; so that to a disregard of this will, to insensibility to the relation we bear, and the obligations under which we lie to him, there shall succeed an earnest desire to please Him, an uninterrupted recollection that under his government we live, and a perpetual consciousness

sciousness, that by His providence we are supported. Consistently with this the great herald of the Gospel, the holy Baptist, admonished all who resorted to his baptism to bring forth fruits meet for repentance; and in various parts of the New Testament, we meet with similar exhortations delivered in the mention of that behaviour which it becomes Christians to observe. Thus St. James describes the wisdom that is from above as being first "pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy." And St. Peter: "Add to your faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge, and to knowledge temperance, and to temperance patience, and to patience godliness, and to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness charity." And St. Paul, under the title of the fruits of the Spirit, enumerates "love, joy, peace, long suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance," adding, "they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts," a catalogue

SERM.  
IX.

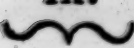
SERM. logue of which he had before given, shewing  
 IX. ing by this opposition, on the one hand, what men are while they continue in sin; and, on the other, what if their repentance be sincere, they ought after that to prove. His list of vices is this: "adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revelings, and such-like."

Now the very great difference there is between the practice of these, and the exercise of the virtues which are enjoined in the several passages I before read to you, might, in the breasts of those who pondered on it, justly excite a two-fold anxiety; causing them, in the first place, to be solicitous for the most satisfactory assurance, that God, whose will it was that men should live so righteously, would receive into favour any who hitherto had been guilty of any of those commissions against which His wrath was so strongly denounced;



granting them, on repentance, perfect re-  
mission; and, in the second place, to fear, SERM.  
IX.  
lest now they were made sensible of the  
guilt and danger of their past behaviour,  
they should find themselves deficient in re-  
solution to continue firm to the purpose  
they had formed of leading new lives, and  
by falling back, in spite of the warning voice  
they had heard to their former evil courses,  
should thereby render themselves inevitably  
subject to the severest inflictions of the  
wrath to come. A remedy for such anxiety,  
whether it took one or both the turns I have  
mentioned, was contained in the doctrine of  
faith towards Jesus Christ. Instruction in  
the atonement made by the shedding of His  
blood, and the assurance given by His re-  
surrection from the dead, of God's accept-  
ance of that atonement, (according to those  
words of the apostle, "who died for our  
sins, and was raised again for our justifica-  
tion,") afforded ample ground for resting  
satisfied, that faith in His blood would be  
imputed for righteousness unto all them that  
believe. For when it appeared, that it was

SERM. through the blood of the Son of God that

IX.  reconciliation was made, no stain seemed too deep for that to reach: when in His intercession men were called to trust, no case could appear desperate; but forgiveness seemed necessarily to follow belief.

And to those whose hearts misgave them that they should not be able to stand in the hour of temptation, but by relapsing into sin anew make themselves objects of the divine displeasure, encouragement was holden forth in the promise Christ had given of the Holy Spirit to all who believed on Him; for that must be sufficient for them. Neither could there be a fear, that He, who had already vouchsafed them redemption by means so full of love, would permit them to lose the benefit thereof merely through their own weakness, but would succour their infirmities, and if they grieved not His Spirit, by it preserve them blameless, and as He had called them to it, would be faithful also to perfect their salvation.

Perfect,

Perfect, therefore, was the remedy offered **SERM.**  
to mankind for the state in which they lay: **IX.**  
there only were wanting to forward deliver-  
ance, their own perception of their wretched  
situation, and serious attention to the words  
which the preachers called on them to re-  
ceive; to produce which, these last were  
incessant in their representations, indefati-  
gable in testifying to all men "repentance  
toward God, and faith toward our Lord  
Jesus Christ;" and in obedience to their  
instructions, in conformity to their example,  
the ministers of the Gospel continue to this  
day testifying the same things, and thus far  
at least shewing themselves as "embassa-  
dors for Christ; as though God did beseech  
you by them; they pray you in Christ's  
stead, be ye reconciled to God." They are  
able to offer you the same ground of hope,  
by calling on you to rely on the all-prevail-  
ing intercession of our ever-living Advocate  
with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous:  
and in your case, as well as in theirs to  
whom the Gospel was first addressed, the  
things more particularly requisite to rescue



SERM. you from the dominion of vice, from the  
IX. power of sin, are serious reflection on your  
spiritual state, and earnest consideration of  
the difference there really is between what  
ye are, and what God requires you to be.  
For although the guilt of every crime we  
commit be in us enhanced by our having  
enjoyed the light of christianity from our  
infancy, and having been instructed in the  
pure and righteous laws of true religion,  
enforced on us by our being made acquainted  
with the terrors of the Lord, and bred up  
in certain expectation of a future day of  
judgment; yet I will hope, that there is  
not one among us fallen away to that de-  
gree from which the apostle to the Hebrews  
says, it is impossible to renew men again  
unto repentance.

Many, I am confident, may, in alleviation  
of their various infractions of the precepts  
of the Gospel, justly plead, that although  
they were indeed carried by their parents to  
baptism, and solemnly introduced into the  
covenant of Christ, yet neither those who  
pledged

pledged themselves to see it given, nor those **SERM.**  
who were most concerned to give it, have **IX.**  
since troubled themselves to furnish them

with any instruction in the conditions of that covenant: that having no serious thoughts of religion instilled into them in their earlier years, it is no wonder if they have been seduced into the paths of vice, and acquired no relish for graver enquiries, no disposition for the soberer employments of piety and devotion: no wonder, if absorbed in the present scene, to which only they have been taught to look, futurity, and what they may therein expect, have never entered into their minds but when introduced by accidental circumstances. I believe too, that still greater numbers have a right to plead in extenuation of their entertaining many evil maxims, in alleviation of many reprehensible omissions, and of many acts of guilt, in a similar style of argument; and to urge, that those with whom they have chiefly passed their lives, have ever consented to them in these things: How should then their ideas be correct, when

SERM. when their falsity was never pointed out to  
IX. them? How should they be conscious of  
deserving rebuke, when they were never  
reproved? How sensible of offence, when  
they were never warned of it?

Now all who make such representations seem, as far as they are just, to stand in the situation of those to whom the Gospel hath not yet been preached; and may, perhaps, be deemed, in the various degrees in which they have been kept in ignorance of its laws and principles, unacquainted with christianity, and to have hitherto lain in ignorance, resembling that at the times of which, it is written, God winked. To you, therefore, who are sensible that ye have heretofore thus walked in darkness, in whatever degree or manner ye may have done so, let me now testify, that "God calleth on you to repent; for that He hath appointed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness." What ye have hitherto been blind to, let me now admonish you to take on you the duties and obli-



obligations of Christians. The pleas which I have now supposed ye might urge in excuse of your past unbecoming conduct, can henceforth be of no avail ; and ye cannot evade the call now made on you, to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world. The recollection of your former misbehaviour should act as an incitement to you to behave otherwise from this time forward ; since, by this mean alone, can ye render the excuses made for the offences ye have already committed admissible. For how shall it be believed, that ye were not before willingly ignorant, if now, that the right road is pointed out to you, ye will not take it ? The Holy Scriptures will furnish you with a perfect rule of life, and by attending to them, ye may learn the truth as it is in Jesus ; and having your eyes open, on the one hand, to the absolute necessity of repentance for your own salvation ; and, on the other, to the certainty of its acceptance with God, if it be sincere, and to the full prospect of all the blessings assured

SERM.

IX.

SERM. assured to the faithful in Christ, ye will  
IX. perceive how inestimable is the loss suffered  
by all who, putting away a good conscience, make shipwreck too of faith: and discerning the great disparity there is between any pleasures ye may gain by continuing in the practice of wickedness, and the happiness ye can secure to yourselves by obeying the laws of religion; finding, too, that obedience to these does, upon trial, prove a work by no means so disgusting or unpleasant as ye before imagined, ye will hence derive encouragement to proceed in the good course on which ye have entered, and tasting of the heavenly gift, made partakers of the Holy Ghost, tasting of the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, ye will wonder at, and be ashamed of your past folly, in having wasted so much time about that which profiteth not, and will "count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord."

The

The difference which I have thus pointed out as subsisting between the state of a sinner, and that of one cleansed from his guilt, and by holding fast the faith, enjoying the hopes of a Christian, is what may be experienced by you all, from whatever evil courses ye turn. For the state of a true disciple of Christ is not even in this world such, but that it affords sources of happiness, superiour to what any other can supply : and the repentance I am recommending to you is not only such as is necessary for those who have been guilty of the more palpable crimes, of the more heinous vices, as adultery, fornication, theft, and the like ; but what is absolutely requisite to the future welfare of all who have hitherto neglected to pay that obedience which the Gospel demands of all its disciples. For consider, how vast the difference between the sober and devout life, which the Scriptures call on us to lead, and that passed by many, who yet, if ye were to talk with them on their hopes of salvation, would tell you, that they had committed nothing  
to

SERM.  
IX.



SERM. to reproach themselves with, and therefore

IX. hoped they should go to Heaven: as if  
exaltation to everlasting life were holden  
out to mankind for having been guilty of  
no mischief in this. While they totally forget the obligation that has all along been incumbent on them, to glorify God with their bodies and souls, which are God's; have never acknowledged the call on them to live as strangers and pilgrims on earth, looking for a better country; but abandoning all care of futurity, have preferred ease and pleasure in the present world to either performing or enquiring after the will of their Creatour, and their own duty and destination under it. These therefore, I say, the dissipated, the idle, the thoughtless worldling, all stand in need of repentance, humble and earnest, for having hitherto shut their eyes to the prospects set before them, and the lessons given them in the sacred volume of revelation. For reflect, who it is that speaks to us therein; consider how kind an earnestness there is in His calls; how much goodness in His promises;  
what

what terrour in His threatnings ; then ask, SERM.  
Whether there be no, or even but a slight, IX.  
degree of criminality, in treating these as  
meriting only little attention ? in letting the  
trifles of life have more frequent place in  
our thoughts than they ? Ask whether,  
since your Creatour hath been pleased to  
deem the work of giving to you, and to  
your brethren, the means of securing your-  
selves immortal life and happiness, not un-  
worthy of His interference in it, it becomes  
you to behave, as if ye either esteemed that  
life as not deserving your endeavours to at-  
tain to it, or thought the means which He  
hath declared to be the only means for that  
end, to be neither the only, nor the proper  
means ? A little recollection will manifest  
to you, that such conduct is replete with  
criminal presumption, and consequently  
convince you, that even those who have  
hitherto been only inadvertent in matters of  
religion, need repentance.

In this, then, as well as in all the other  
various degrees in which it may be wanted,  
let

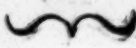
SERM. let me earnestly recommend it unto you.

IX. There is no one among us who hath not something yet left in his conduct, or his disposition, that requires amendment; something which, if tried by the standard of the word of truth, would be found defective; and there is no point of improvement at which we must needs stop, either on account of our own perfection, or on that of our inability to proceed farther; since our power is not from ourselves, but from God, and to what shall not His spirit suffice? While, if we undertake not this work now, what time shall we appoint for beginning it? Is not that the most proper hour when God calleth us to it? and doth He not do so at present, as it is written, "Repent, for the kingdom of Heaven is at hand:" and again, "Behold *now* is the accepted time; Behold *now* is the day of salvation?" Or "knowing the time, that it is now high time to awake out of sleep; because now is our salvation nearer than when we believed," ought we not to consider, that, as when the desolation of Jerusalem approached,



proached, the holy baptist warned her children, that now the axe was laid unto the root of the trees, therefore every tree that did not bring forth good fruit should be hewn down, and cast into the fire; so now, that the days of vengeance are manifestly coming on the apostate Christian world, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, will overtake every soul of man that doeth evil; and that therefore, if we would save ourselves from among this untoward generation, we must "repent, and be converted; that our sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; and He shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: whom the heavens must receive, until the times of the restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began," and "which in His times He shall shew, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords; Who only hath immortality,

SERM.

IX.  


SERM. dwelling in the light which no man can  
IX. approach unto; Whom no man hath seen,  
nor can see; to Whom be honour and power  
everlasting. Amen!"

## SERMON X.

ON THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE CHURCH  
BY THE APOSTLES.

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Acts xiv. 23.

*And when they had ordained them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed.*

THE persons here spoken of are the SERM.  
X.  
teachers Barnabas and Saul, who had been sent by the express command of the Holy Ghost to preach the Gospel in several provinces of Asia Minor, and in the adjacent islands; and the words inform us of a material step they took towards perpetuating in the churches they founded, the faith themselves had preached; by ordaining  
o 2 elders,



SERM. <sup>x.</sup> elders, or what, by a corruption of the original Greek term, we call priests, in every city : and I shall, from them, take occasion to call your attention, both to the mode in which the apostles of the Lord established a regular form of ecclesiastical government for the congregations of their converts, and the manner in which their institutions have been observed and continued to our own time. Since, by thus deducing them from their origin, many particulars may be explained, and the differences be shewn between real departures from the apostolical institutions, and those alterations which time and difference of situation render either necessary, or becoming ; and ye may be enabled, on the one hand, to stop the mouths of those who strive to justify real corruptions, and, on the other, justly to contend for usages delivered to the churches, by those whom our blessed Saviour His self sent to plant them.

The book of the Acts of the Apostles, compared with their epistles, will give us  
a suf-

a sufficiently particular, as well as perfectly **SERM.**  
authentick account, of the order they esta- **X.**  
blished “ for the work of the ministry,  
for the edifying of the body of Christ.”

Christians, indeed, in general, seem not sufficiently aware of the very interesting information which this portion of the sacred volume contains, by manifesting the great outlines of that establishment, by means of which christianity has subsisted as the law of a most extensive society, for so many ages. It is in the sixth chapter of this book, that we read of the first appointment the apostles made of officers to assist in ministering to those who had embraced the faith. On a complaint of the widows of the Grecian Jews being neglected in the daily distribution of necessaries that was then made, seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and of wisdom, were chosen by the multitude of the disciples to be appointed over this business, on whom the apostles, after they had prayed, laid their hands; and these, in allusion to the service for which they were appointed, were called

SERM. ministers, or, in the term which we have  
 X. transplanted into our own language from  
 the Greek, *deacons*.

Thus was another order of men below that of the twelve solemnly set apart in the church to take care of those things, to attend to which they could not leave their prayer, and the ministry of the word. Yet neither did this charge prevent the deacons from continuing to act as preachers of the Gospel, since we not only find Philip so doing at Samaria, and other cities, but afterwards see him called by St. Luke, Philip the Evangelist, in the same passage in which he is declared to be one of the seven. (Acts xxi. 8.) As the churches encreased, more deacons were ordained either by the apostles themselves, or by those whom they appointed to the superintendence of them. This appears from the directions given by St. Paul to Timothy, when he wrote to him, as he expressly declares, “ that he might know how to behave himself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God :”  
 for



for he then stated of what character the SERM.  
deacons should be, and directed, that they X.  
should be first proved before they were ad-  
mitted to the office ; (1 Tim. iii. 8—13.)  
and he charged him too, “ to lay hands  
suddenly on no man, neither be partaker of  
other men’s sins.” A needless caution, if  
Timothy had not been invested with autho-  
rity to ordain.

And here let me point out to you the  
little variation between the present office of  
deacons, and that which was originally  
assigned them. In our own church, indeed,  
the attending on the daily distribution to  
the poor has been almost wholly taken out  
of their hands by the government of the  
country ; but let not the ministers of the  
church be blamed for that. A tyrannical  
monarch, who assumed the mask of refor-  
mation (as it too often is assumed) for the  
gratification of his inordinate appetites, so  
plundered the church of her funds for  
charity, that there was nothing left for the  
deacons to distribute. While the collection

SERM. made in the church itself has been ordered  
X. to be distributed by more modern officers ;  
how far consistently with the reverence due  
to the apostolick institution, they who have  
deviated from it must answer. As to the  
other particulars I have noticed from the  
Scriptures—No one is here admitted to the  
office of a deacon who has not first been  
proved, by the bishop's examination into  
his qualifications for the charge, and by a  
solemn testimonial of his character and  
conduct, under the hands of three persons,  
who have themselves already been deemed  
worthy to be entrusted with the cure of  
souls. So that however individuals may  
deviate from the line that has been marked  
out to them, the church of England has  
made provision, that hands shall be laid  
suddenly on no man.

It appears from the text, that the apostles  
ordained another order of men in every  
church, beside the deacons ; and these, as I  
have before observed, were called elders,  
presbyters, or priests, but not merely in  
allusion

allusion to age, (though that was the original source of the title under the Old Testament) but as a name of office, and expressive of authority. It should seem, that they were at first, too, sometimes called bishops, a word literally signifying overseers, though this term was soon restrained to those who succeeded the apostles in the inspection of more churches than one. The priests, in the primitive church, discharged the same functions as are assigned to them at present, and were to be proved in the same particulars. This charge, as to their characters, we find in the third chapter of St. Paul's first epistle to Timothy; and as to the soundness of their doctrine, and ability to teach, in the following words of the same apostle's epistle to Titus, "holding fast the faithful word, as he hath been taught, that he may be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort and to convince the gainfayers." (Tit. i. 9.) and yet have some found in their hearts to revile our church, because, in compliance with this apostolick direction, she allows no one to be admitted  
into

SERM.

X.



**SERM.** into holy orders, who will not declare, that  
**X.** he holds that doctrine which she conceives  
to be delivered in the Holy Scriptures.  
How reasonably they reproach her with  
this, and how much more justly she might  
be blamed, if she betrayed her trust, and  
suffered her bishops to lay hands on any  
without a previous strict examination, from  
this simple statement of the charge of an  
apostle on the subject, ye yourselves may  
now judge.

We now come to the highest order of  
ecclesiastical ministers appointed by the  
apostles, that to which priests, as well as  
deacons, were subject. The inferiority of  
these two last appears from the epistles al-  
ready quoted. In that to Titus we read,  
that one purpose for which he was left in  
Crete, was to ordain elders in every city.  
Now as the authour of the epistle to the  
Hebrews well argues as to blessing, without  
all contradiction the less is ordained of the  
greater, and consequently Titus must have  
holden a rank higher than that of those he  
ordained.

ordained. Whether these of this rank were **SERM.**  
then called by another title, and had that **X.**  
of bishops afterwards restrained to them or  
not, is a question the resolution of which  
will never prevail with any but men of  
perverse minds, to deny, that there were  
ministers of the church, to whom was com-  
mitted, by the apostles, the oversight of  
the elders or priests, and inferiour officers,  
as long as these epistles of St. Paul exist,  
that are addressed to two persons of that  
description, giving them directions for the  
government of these orders: and in the  
very next age, we have the concurrent  
testimony of antiquity, confirming the in-  
stitution of this superiour order by the  
apostles, and appropriating to the ministers  
of that the title of bishops. So that as the  
writings of St. Paul prove that there was  
such an order from the first, those of the  
Christians of succeeding ages demonstrate,  
that that was specifically the order of those  
that have been since called bishops. These  
were considered as successors of the apostles  
in their government of the church; through  
them

**SERM.** them the connection of it was traced to the  
**X.** great corner stone Jesus Christ, the Shepherd and Bishop of our souls : and by communion with them was the unity of the church thought to be preserved. Every one who separated from that, destroyed that beneficial and beauteous harmony which properly belongs to the body of Christ, and brought scandal upon the doctrine they had learned ; they therefore were, according to St. Paul's direction, to be marked and avoided. (Rom. xvi. 17.) For this crime of schism, though from the frequency of it now scarcely considered as blameable, was by those who retained the doctrine of the apostles uncorrupted, viewed with so great disapprobation, that any who assembled separate from their bishops and priests, were not considered as forming a church. Here it will naturally occur to you, that great indeed has been the deviation from the manners of the primitive Christians, almost every parish now having a congregation of separatists. But this is not to be charged on the church ; she does not cease to testify, that schism is a  
crime,



crime, nor to pray that her members may **SERM.**  
be delivered from it ; but woe to those who, **X.**  
under pretence of reforming, only divide  
the body of Christ. It was not thus that  
our ancestors acted, when they purified  
their worship from Romish corruptions.  
It was not merely the discipline that was  
then relaxed, but the doctrine, that was de-  
praved, and therefore they reformed their  
practice according to the words of Scrip-  
ture, and led their congregations to amend-  
ment, by the light of christian truth, not  
to fanaticism, by the presumptuous effu-  
sions of ignorance.

But to return to the bishops of the pri-  
mitive times : each of them considering  
himself as having succeeded to the seat of  
an apostle, acknowledged no dependence on  
any other farther than what a community  
of doctrine, faith and charity, required,  
and consequently the supremacy, since  
claimed by the bishops of Rome, (now  
more commonly known by the name of the  
Popes) was, during the most uncorrupted  
age

SERM. age of christianity, unheard of : afterwards,  
X. indeed, different circumstances concurring  
in favour of their ambitious desires, they  
were enabled to gratify them to an astonishing  
extent, until they obtained, in this  
western portion of the world, an absolute  
authority in spirituals, joined to a power  
little less despotick in temporals, which  
continued unshaken to the commencement  
of the sixteenth century ; when the famous  
Luther being led to search the Scriptures,  
found the contents of them so different in  
many points from what was taught by the  
ministers of the church of Rome, that he  
determined on translating the Bible from  
the Latin tongue, in which it had, till then,  
been locked up, into the language of his own  
country ; that the people might, if they  
would, learn from the fountain-head what  
they were called on to believe, what they  
were commanded to practise. This unseal-  
ing of the sacred volume, forwarded the  
work of reformation, in which our own  
country took a noble part, conducting her  
measures with a mixture of courage and  
temper-

temperance scarcely, if at all equalled, by **SERM.**  
any church in christendom; and stating, in **X.**  
her homilies and articles, what she had  
ascertained to be the doctrine of Scripture  
on the chief points then brought into con-  
troverſy, and, by their aſſent to which arti-  
cles, ſhe now proves the ſoundneſs of the  
doctrine of thoſe whom ſhe admits to any  
ſacred office.

Neither was the care of our reformers  
confined to bringing back the doctrine of  
the church to the true ſtandard: they en-  
deavoured alſo to clear the rites and ceremo-  
nies of it from every oſtentatious and ſuper-  
fluous addition, from every thing that might  
lead the mind from true devotion and real  
righteouſneſs, to truſt in ſhow, and reſt in  
empty forms; for this end the practice of  
the Chriſtians of the three firſt centuries  
was taken as an enſample; and while en-  
deavours were uſed not to depart from the  
apoſtolic maxim, that “no man taketh  
this honour unto himſelf but he that is  
called of God,” by permitting no one to  
miniſter



**SERM.** minister in the church, who has not declared before her elders, that he believes himself so called, and is, on such declaration, duly ordained to his office, what seemed mere parade in sumptuousness of vestments was laid aside, and her formulary of devotion reduced to the simplicity of the early rituals. How little the service we still perform on the Lord's day differs from that which our earliest predecessors in christianity were wont to pay, ye may judge from the following short account, copied from an eminent historian, who has taken it chiefly from what is left us by one of the primitive martyrs. " In these assemblies, (speaking of those of the church) the Holy Scriptures were publicly read, and for that purpose were divided into certain portions, or lessons. This part of divine service was followed by a brief exhortation to the people. The prayers, which made a considerable part of the publick worship, came in at the conclusion of these discourses, and were repeated by the people, after the bishop or presbyter, who presided in

in the service. To these were added, cer- SERM.  
tain hymns, which were sung not by the X.  
whole assembly, but by persons appointed  
for that purpose, during the celebration of  
the Lord's supper and the feasts of charity.  
Such (continues the historian) were the  
essential parts of divine worship, which  
were observed in all christian churches,  
though, perhaps, the method and order in  
which they were performed were not the  
same in all." (Mosh. Cent. 1. p. 2. ch. 4.)  
Behold then here particularized the lessons,  
the prayers, the sermon, and the psalms,  
which are still continued in our religious  
assemblies; and observe, how little the ser-  
vice of our own church differs from that  
of the purest ages; a circumstance well  
worthy of admiration, after the revolution  
of so many centuries, and calculated to call  
to our minds the promise given to the dis-  
ciples of our blessed Master, when He gave  
them commission to preach the Gospel to  
all nations; "And lo, I am with you al-  
way, unto the end of the world."

SERM.

X.  


We have thus far seen what provision was made for the appointment and establishment and continuance of teachers and rulers in the church. Let us next enquire how they were impowered to support the authority thus submitted to them? Our Lord had directed, that wherever one Christian transgressed against another, the last appeal of the brother offended should be to the church, and if the transgressor would not listen to the admonition or sentence of that, he should be treated as an heathen and a publican. And, in consonance with this precept, St. Paul, writing to Titus, first bishop of Crete, says, "A man that is an heretick after the first and second admonition reject: knowing that he which is such is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself." Tit. iii. 10, 11. From hence arose that practice of solemnly putting obstinate offenders out of the communion of the church, by what is called excommunication: the weight of which censure, when justly and duely passed, may be estimated by the words of Christ, after those in which he

he



he commanded the church to award it. SERM.

“ Verily I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven.” (Matt. xiii. 18.)

Than which I conceive scarcely any terms can more strongly express the ratification of every righteous sentence of his church, by our Father which is in Heaven.

Let us therefore no longer imagine, that either drawing on ourselves, or deserving the censure of the church, is a matter of light consequence, otherwise the neglect of a first and second admonition would not have been followed by rejection, and an heretic would not have been put on a footing with an heathen, who is a stranger to the covenants of promise. For it should ever be remembered, that heresy specifically consists in that wilfulness, by which a man, after being duly admonished both privately and publickly of his errour, persists in maintaining it. In all cases, therefore, where this obstinacy has been shewn, those

SERM. guilty of it are justly denominated hereticks;  
X. and however angry they may be at being  
described under it, when not applied from  
strife or wantonness, they can, in equity,  
blame themselves only for the disgrace they  
suffer from the name. Numerous are the  
distinctions, and almost endless the evasions,  
by which those who have swerved from  
the doctrine, once delivered to the saints,  
yet endeavour to prove, that they hold the  
truth as it is in Jesus; to meet these, it is  
necessary that we not only produce the  
words of Scripture, but that we often shew  
too, that we take them in the very same  
sense in which those who enjoyed the  
benefit of the traditional explanation of the  
apostles themselves understood them. On  
this account it is, that the works of the  
christian writers of the three first centuries  
after our blessed Lord's nativity, are so often  
appealed to in theological controversies; and  
that it is necessary that the teachers of the  
church should be acquainted with eccle-  
siastical history, that they may be able to  
teach others whence the prevalent errors  
arose,

arose, and point out to them the distinction SERM.  
between the real christian tenets, and those X.  
which assume only their appearance. For

is not the very great success which sectaries of every kind meet with among us, inso-much that there is no novelty in faith or morals started in the nation, but it soon gains followers; is not this, I say, in no inconsiderable part of it, owing to the ignorance of those with whom the propagators of sophistry and misrepresentation are able to prevail? And how is this ignorance to be remedied, unless the established teachers of the church are able to give the necessary information to those entrusted to their guidance? But, surely, such ability is not to be expected from any who are put into the order of the clergy by their parents, because they apprehend that they have not powers to succeed in other professions; or from any who, having met with disappointment, or perhaps even incurred disgrace in other lines, take refuge in this; and make the altar of the Lord, to which no blemish

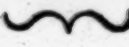


SERM. Should approach, a receptacle for the weak,  
X. the sick, the halt, and the blind?



But severe as are the censures merited by those who are thus guilty of profaning the house of the living God, it is to be remembered, that on the other hand, numerous are the clergy who have given attendance to reading and to doctrine, and whose lips keep knowledge: while those who should seek the law at their mouths, prefer the risk of transgression to submitting to that confession of ignorance which a request of information implies; and if the unity of the faith, the preservation of which is, by the apostles, strongly urged as an indispensable duty, be broken by such; if they cease to listen to those who are set over them in the Lord, and will not endure sound doctrine, but, as described in the spirit of prophecy, after their own lusts, heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and be turned unto fables, on whom is the destruction of such to be charged, should they perish in the gainsaying of Korah?

Suffici-

Sufficiently explicit is the command of SERM.  
our Lord, that we should listen to his X.  
apostles, as invested with his authority : 

“ He that heareth you heareth me ; and he that despiseth you despiseth me ; and he that despiseth me despiseth Him that sent me.” (Luke x. 16.) Nor are the directions which his apostles have left us, as to the attention we ought to pay to the ministers they have established in the church, less intelligible. Thus the apostle to the Hebrews : “ Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves : for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief : for that is not profitable for you.” (Heb. xiii. 17.) And ye have seen, that the very orders that still rule and minister in the church, were originally appointed by the apostles to wait on these very things. A succession of such was provided for when St. Paul charged Timothy, “ the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach

SERM. others also." (2 Tim. ii. 2.) And it was  
X. pointed out too, how they should be supported: "Let him that is taught in the word, communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things. Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth that shall he reap. For he that soweth to his flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the spirit, shall of the spirit reap life everlasting." (Gal. vi. 6, 7, 8.) And to the Corinthians, "Do ye not know that they which minister about holy things, live of the things of the temple? and they which wait at the altar, are partakers with the altar? Even so hath the Lord ordained, that they which preach the Gospel, should live of the Gospel." (1 Cor. ix. 13, 14.) And again to Timothy, "Let the elders that rule well, be accounted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine: for the Scripture saith, thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn. And the labourer is worthy of his reward." (1 Tim. v. 17, 18.) So that, as ye have  
seen



seen by the deduction I have now led you SERM.  
through, the foundation of the establish- X.  
ment, in its several parts, was laid by our  
blessed Redeemer and his apostles to the  
end, that all the building being fitly framed  
together, might grow unto an holy temple  
in the Lord.

That by the sinful perverseness of men,  
the progress of this edifice hath been im-  
peded, and by their corruptions, the beauty  
of it much defaced, is but too visible; and  
since there can be no doubt of the sinfulness  
of thus opposing the merciful dispensations  
of God, and as little of the punishment of  
those guilty of it, does it not most highly  
behave all who would be esteemed by our  
Lord as members of his church, to “re-  
member from whence they are fallen, and  
repent, and do the first works;” to imitate  
the earliest professors of the Gospel, in  
striving to preserve the unity of the church,  
by not separating themselves from its assem-  
blies, by attention to its rulers, by partici-  
pating in its rites, and “marking them  
which

SERM. which cause divisions and offences, contrary  
 X. to the doctrine which we have learned, and  
 avoiding them." By a conduct like this,  
 we might hope, in some measure, to revive  
 that mutual, steady, and close attachment,  
 that formerly existed between the priests  
 and the people, and see the first tenderly  
 watchful over the flocks, and the latter, not  
 as now, either carried away with every  
 wind of doctrine, or else caring for none  
 of the things which pertain unto religion;  
 but consulting their spiritual pastors, when-  
 ever a doubt arose in their minds; in sick-  
 ness, calling for them to pray by them;  
 and in health, walking together "worthy  
 of the vocation with which they are called,  
 with all lowliness and meekness, with long-  
 suffering, forbearing one another in love,  
 and growing up into him in all things,  
 which is the head, even Christ. To  
 whom, &c."

# SERMON XI.

ON THE UNITY OF GOD.

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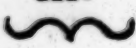
I COR. VIII. 6.

*But to us there is but one God, the Father,  
of whom are all things, and we by Him.*

**I**N the preceding verse the apostle had SERM. XI.  
said, that many there were called gods and many lords, herein alluding to the numerous fancied deities, the worship of one or more of whom had been set up in almost every nation under Heaven, instead of the service of the one true God. Whether this deviation from truth and reason manifested itself among mankind before the flood or not, it either broke out anew, or originally began within a very few ages after the earth was recovered from that divine chastisement;



SERM. tisement; and it so increased during the  
XI. course of years, that the world gradually  
became, as it were, peopled with imaginary  
gods: every nation, every city, nay, every  
house, had its peculiar idols; every moun-  
tain, every river, every grove and spring,  
was supposed to be under the protection of  
some invisible being; and a man landing  
on a strange shore, could not cut a branch  
from a tree, nor kill a beast, but supersti-  
tion suggested the violation of some local  
divinity. Nor was this all, for the general  
opinion having once taken such a turn, the  
crafty and designing soon discovered and  
made use of the means of imposition thus  
offered to them, and every fact they were  
ashamed to confess, every deed they wished  
to conceal, was laid to the charge of those  
whom they adored: and then, practices  
which were thus ascribed to the gods soon  
ceased to appear heinous in the persons of  
their votaries, until at length the very vices  
were consecrated, and prostitution itself was  
made an act of religion. To prevent this  
apostacy from universally prevailing, the  
family

family of Abraham were, as you have been **SERM.**  
apprized, separated, at the commencement **XI.**  
of it, from the other families of the earth.   
But while the primeval faith of one God  
was, by this mean, continued among them,  
to the rest of the nations a new publication  
of it was requisite, and therefore did the  
apostles of Christ go forth in the power of  
the Lord, calling upon men to renounce  
these vanities, and turn from idols to the  
living God; and teaching, in the words of  
the text, that to the truly faithful "there  
is but one God, the Father, of whom are  
all things."

It is to this fundamental doctrine of true  
religion that I mean now to call your atten-  
tion, purposing, in the present discourse,  
to speak of the unity of God, as forming  
the ground of some other of the divine at-  
tributes; and then to consider the specifick  
character of the Father, under which He  
is mentioned in the text.

The

**SERM.** The arguments which were set before  
**XI.** you in proof of the being of a God, will,  
with very little alteration, suffice to demonstrate, that there is none other but He : and had those who pretended to wisdom among the ancient Heathens so far done justice to themselves, as to pursue their enquiries into the nature of God, as far as their faculties would have permitted them, they might, from premisses of which they were already in possession, have fairly, and without difficulty, arrived at the conclusion, that God is one. To this, every part of nature bears testimony by the harmony that reigns throughout it : with regularity uninterrupted, do the heavenly bodies move ; on earth, “ seed time, harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night,” keep their appointed seasons. The analogy in structure, and mode of subsistence, the gradual subordination, and profitable subserviency, that exists between different portions of the world, speak the same language ; and while we observe, that the ground supports the plants, the plants the  
animals,



animals, and the other animals man, and SERM.  
that man, in his turn, tills the ground, our XI.  
foolish hearts must, indeed, be darkened, if  
in this circular chain of connection we de-  
sery not an unity of design, an identity of  
operation, which demonstrates, that "it is  
the same God who worketh all in all."  
We see that the same principles of divine  
government prevail throughout the world :  
in the east as well as the west, an overruling  
hand putteth down one, and setteth up ano-  
ther : virtue and vice are attended with cer-  
tain consequences in the northern as well as  
in the southern hemisphere ; and it is mani-  
fest, that neither the wicked nor the righte-  
ous receive their final recompence in either.  
If we enquire of past generations, and exa-  
mine the writings of those who have gone  
before us, we may trace, for thousands of  
years, the same effects attending on human  
conduct ; temperance and intemperance,  
probity and iniquity, have the same tendency  
to produce health and disease, comfort and  
distress, in the present day, as they have  
had from the beginning of history. And  
what

SERM. what is the conclusion naturally resulting

XI. from all this, but that these several parts of the universe are subject to the uncontrouled command, and sole supremacy, of Him whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and whose dominion endureth throughout all ages? and these arguments of the divine unity might, I say, have been observed by those who professed themselves wise among the ancients; but they attended not to the obligations incumbent on them, to honour their Creatour, and therefore He gave them up to the dishonour of the most disgraceful debasements: yet, in the tenderness of His mercy, again manifested His glory to the nations who had so grossly fallen short of it, by making known to them His sole godhead, through direct and plain assertion, supported by works, which have been purposely so conducted as to prove, that there is no being who can contend with Him in power, or rival Him in greatness. That this was repeatedly signified through His prophets to be His intention, in making known, long before what He would bring

to

to pass, that it might from facts be seen, SERM.  
that there is no power in the universe XI.  
capable of invalidating His word, or counter-  
acting His purpose, I scarcely need re-  
mind you ; the sublime passages in the book  
of Isaiah on this point, if once heard, can  
hardly be forgotten. “ Thus saith the  
Lord, the King of Israel, and His Redeemer  
the Lord of hosts, I am the first, and I am  
the last, and besides me there is no God.  
And who, as I, shall call and declare it, and  
set it in order for me, since I appointed the  
ancient people ? and the things that are  
coming, and shall come ? Let them shew  
unto them. Fear ye not, neither be afraid :  
have I not told thee from that time, and  
have declared it ? Ye are even my wit-  
nesses. Is there a God besides me ? Yea,  
there is no God ; I know not any.” (Isaiah  
xliv. 6, 7, 8.) Again : “ I am the Lord,  
that maketh all things, that stretcheth forth  
the heavens alone, that spreadeth abroad the  
earth by myself ; that frustrateth the tokens  
of the liars, and maketh diviners mad ; that  
turneth wise men backward, and maketh  
VOL. I. Q their



**SERM.** their knowledge foolish; that confirmeth  
**XI.** the word of His servant, and performeth  
 the counsel of His messengers; that saith  
 to Jerusalem, thou shalt be inhabited; and  
 to the cities of Judah, ye shall be built,  
 and I will raise up the decayed places  
 thereof." (Is. xlv. 24, 25, 26.) And in  
 the xlvith, "Remember the former things  
 of old, for I am God, and there is none  
 else; I am God, and there is none like me,  
 declaring the end from the beginning, and  
 from ancient times the things that are not  
 yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand,  
 and I will do all my pleasure." And in still  
 fuller terms in the xliiid chapter; "Let all  
 the nations be gathered together, and let the  
 people be assembled: who among them can  
 declare this, and shew us former things?  
 Let them bring forth their witnesses, that  
 they may be justified: or let them hear and  
 say, it is truth. Ye are my witnesses, saith  
 the Lord, and my servant whom I have  
 chosen: that ye may know and believe me,  
 and understand that I am He: before me  
 there was no God formed, neither shall there  
 be

be after me : I, even I, am the Lord, and SERM.  
beside me there is no Saviour. I have de- XI.  
clared, I have saved, and I have shewed  
when there was no strange God among  
you : therefore ye are my witnesses, saith  
the Lord, that I am God. Yea, before the  
day was, I am He ; and there is none that  
can deliver out of my hand : I will work,  
and who shall let it ?”

Now as the exclusive dominion and sole  
godhead, claimed by the Lord God of Israel  
in these declarations, and demonstrated by  
what He has asserted, should be brought to  
pass, never having been prevented, and  
what He has declared should not be done,  
never having been accomplished, prove the  
divine unity ; so from this by easy, and  
indeed necessary inference, may be deduced  
the eternity, the omnipotence, the incom-  
prehensibility and spirituality of God. For  
if there be no other besides Him, He must  
be the Being of which infinite time, and  
boundless space, are the accidents ; whose  
days have been from everlasting, and whose

SERM. presence filleth heaven and earth. With  
XI. Him too, who is before and above all who  
shall contend? or what cannot He do who  
has the power of creation? He is therefore  
Almighty. And, lastly, since we know so  
much of the properties of matter or body  
as to perceive that two bodies cannot exist  
in the same place at the same time, it ne-  
cessary follows, that that Being, who is  
always every where, must be of an higher  
nature, and consequently that, according to  
the words of our blessed Saviour, " God  
is a Spirit."

Having thus spoken of the unity of God  
as forming ground on which to demonstrate  
His eternity, omnipotence, incomprehen-  
sibility and spirituality, the specifick charac-  
ter under which He is mentioned in the  
text as the Father, of whom are all things,  
is next to be considered.

On the propriety with which He, who  
is the Authour and Maker of all things,  
might, on that account alone, be called the  
Father



Father of all, I need not enlarge. This SERM.  
endearing appellation was wont to be given XI.  
by the ancient idolaters even to the imaginary  
beings from whom they expected, or fancied  
they had received, protection. And how  
much more justly may the true God be re-  
garded as a parent by those to whom His  
wondrous works have made known the re-  
ality of His superintendence, and whom  
His merciful provisions have convinced of  
the constancy of His providence. If ye  
have but duly reflected on the instances of  
the loving-kindness and tender mercies of  
the Lord, which have been pointed out in  
the discourses I have already read to you,  
ye will be inclined to acknowledge His  
parental goodness in terms no less warm  
than those which the prophet Isaiah em-  
ployed in his supplications for his afflicted  
country: "Doubtless thou art our Father,  
though Abraham be ignorant of us, and  
Israel acknowledge us not: Thou, O Lord,  
art our Father, our Redeemer: thy name  
is from everlasting." For your attention  
has been called not only to those proofs of  
the

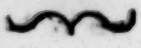
**SERM.** the fatherly kindness of God, which arise  
**XI.** from His having provided a place meet for  
our habitation, and furnished it with every  
necessary for food and raiment, with many  
means of delight, with various sources of  
instruction, but to those stronger testimonies  
of paternal care, afforded us by the remedies  
for the consequences of our folly, and even  
for some of those of our faults, which are  
prepared in different productions of the  
earth; and yet to the still higher instance  
of love shewn to mankind, in seeking us  
when we were lost, and receiving us, though  
we were prodigal children, by the glorious  
gospel of Christ. In this, indeed, not only  
the character of a Father is exhibited to us,  
by that most irrefragable proof of His  
pitying us as a man pitieth his own chil-  
dren, His sending His only begotten Son  
into the world to ransom us from death;  
but we are more particularly called on to  
consider Him in it; and to confide in His  
dispensations as those of an affectionate  
parent, whose study it is to promote the  
lasting welfare of His offspring. "Blessed,  
faith

faith St. Peter, be the God and Father of our **SERM.**  
 Lord Jesus Christ, which, according to His **XI.**  
 abundant mercy, hath *begotten us* again  
 unto a lively hope, by the resurrection of  
 Jesus Christ from the dead." And St.  
 Paul: " But when the fulness of time  
 was come, God sent forth His Son, made  
 of a woman, under the law, to redeem them  
 that were under the law, that we might  
 receive the adoption of sons. And because  
 ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit  
 of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba,  
 Father. *Wherefore*, continues he, *Tbou art*  
*no more a servant, but a son ; and if a son,*  
*then an heir of God through Christ."* St.  
 John too: " Behold, what manner of love  
 the Father hath bestowed on us, that we  
 should be called the sons of God."

Thus did the apostles inculcate the doctrine of God's having vouchsafed again to prove Himself a Father to the human race, by appointing them as His sons to an inheritance in the realms of light ; and, in consonance with this, we are, in many



**SERM.** places of the New Testament, admonished  
**XI.** to place the fullest confidence in His fatherly  
goodness. “Wherefore, faith our Lord,  
if God so clothe the grafs of the field,  
which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into  
the oven, shall He not much more clothe  
you, O ye of little faith: therefore take no  
thought, saying, What shall we eat? or  
what shall we drink? or wherewithal shall  
we be clothed?—For your heavenly Father  
knoweth that ye have need of all these  
things.” And again: “What man is there  
of you, whom if his son ask bread, will  
he give him a stone? or if he ask a fish,  
will he give him a serpent? If ye then,  
being evil, know how to give good gifts  
unto your children, how much more shall  
your Father, which is in heaven, give good  
things to them that ask Him?” And that  
He will thus give us all things, His having  
already given His Son for our redemption,  
is urged as a pledge. Hear this in the  
forcible language of the apostle of the  
Gentiles: “He that spared not His own  
Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how  
shall

shall He not with Him also freely give us SERM.  
all things." In truth, this pledge forms in XI.  
itself a commencement of the gift; since,   
by having reconciliation made for us, we  
are put into a state to receive every good  
thing, even immortality itself, by which  
the merciful work of the Lord will be com-  
pleted in us, by making us conformable to  
the image of His own Son, who hath no  
end of days. And this suggests to our  
consideration the other sense in which God  
is, in the sacred writings, mentioned by the  
name of the Father,

That man must, indeed, be without re-  
flection, who can have read the New Testa-  
ment, and not have observed, that the first  
of that eternal and ever-blessed Trinity,  
whose names have been called over us,  
and to whose service we have all been dedi-  
cated in baptism, is, as the fountain of the  
other two divine persons, and more parti-  
cularly as the Father of our Lord, in His  
divine nature, termed *the Father*. Thus  
we read in the fourth chapter of St. John's  
first

**SERM.** first epistle: "We have seen, and do testify,  
**XI.** that the Father sent the Son to be the  
 Saviour of the world." And in the eleventh  
 chapter of St. Matthew's Gospel are these  
 words of our Lord Himself: "No man  
 knoweth the Son but the Father; neither  
 knoweth any man the Father, save the Son,  
 and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal  
 Him." And, in the fifteenth of St. John's  
 Gospel, our Saviour saith most appositely to  
 the distinction before us, "He that hateth  
 me, hateth my Father also. If I had not  
 done among them the works which none  
 other man did, they had not had sin: but  
 now have they both seen and hated both me  
 and my Father. But this cometh to pass,  
 that the word might be fulfilled that is  
 written in their law, they hated me with-  
 out a cause. But when the Comforter is  
 come, whom I will send unto you from the  
 Father, even the Spirit of truth, which  
 proceedeth from the Father, He shall testify  
 of me."

It



It was in the name of this His Father SERM.  
that our Lord delivered His doctrine, in XI.  
His name He wrought His miracles, thus  
revealing to us the will and the power of  
Him whom no one hath seen, or can see;  
and to His glory He referred whatever He  
did; herein giving us an example to keep  
perpetually in our minds our relation to the  
invisible Sovereign of the world, and to  
comply with His own precept, "to let our  
light so shine before men, that they may  
see our good works, and glorify our Father  
which is in Heaven." Some of the obli-  
gations incumbent on us to do this, natu-  
rally arise as inferences from what has been  
laid before you in the present discourse, and  
with a statement of them I shall close it.

After what ye have heard from the words  
of the prophet Isaiah, that "besides the  
Lord there is no Saviour," how can ye pos-  
sibly be guiltless, if ye trust for safety or  
ease, or for success in any thing but His  
protection? When He hath vouchsafed to  
declare Himself the Authour of the good  
and

**SERM.** and evil which befall us, and deigned to  
**XI.** call on us to look up to Him as our Pro-  
tectour, can we, without shewing a mistrust  
of His faithfulness, or a doubt of His  
power, hope to encrease our comforts, or  
lessen our sufferings, by any thing separate  
from His service? How vainly, therefore,  
do they labour, who, casting all remem-  
brance of God behind them, think to ob-  
tain happiness by pursuing any course in  
which they cannot continue under His  
patronage! Ye may gratify your inordinate  
desires, by revelling in present pleasures:  
by the indulgences of vanity, ye may soothe  
your pride; and by unjust gains, ye may  
encrease your substance. But who can  
secure you from the diseases to which the  
first will naturally expose you? Who pre-  
vent the bitter mortifications to which the  
second will as naturally render you liable?  
or who defend you from the losses that may  
strip you of the last? And, above all, who  
can relieve your souls from that worm to  
which each of these courses will necessarily  
give birth? If there be (and ye now know  
there

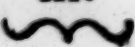
there is) but One who can do these things, SERM.  
and yet He will not clear the guilty; is it XI.  
not madness not to keep innocence, and take  
heed to the thing that is right in His eyes?

Again: since we are informed of the universal and uncontrouled dominion of the Lord our God, is it not acting inconsistently with the instruction thus vouchsafed us, to permit the fear of any other being to torment us? To suppose wicked spirits can, without this commission, wreak their malice on us; or the ghosts of the departed return to earth to terrify us? Or is it less than prophanation to imagine, that He whose word is a law to the universe, will convey His decrees by the mouth of a hag, to be revealed for a penny, or make some of the most abandoned of mankind His messengers? Henceforth, therefore, beware of giving way to superstitious fears, so contrary to the faith of a Christian; and of making yourselves partakers of other men's sins, by encouraging those presumptuous wretches,



**SERM.** wretches, who wander from door to door,  
**XI.** pretending to an insight into futurity !

When ye are apprized, according to what ye have heard in the former part of this discourse, that out of the hand of the Lord God of Israel no one can deliver, does it not behove you to attend to the caution of His apostle, that it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God ; and, consequently, to avoid provoking His just wrath and indignation, by neglecting to render what is due unto Him as a Father, and as a Master. Here the words of the prophet Malachi demand our attention : “ A son honoureth his father, and a servant his master. If, then, I be a Father, where is mine honour ? and if I be a Master, where is my fear ? saith the Lord of Hosts unto you, O priests, that despise my name.” If we deem it reproachful to men not to honour their fathers of the flesh, how much rather shall we deem it so not to render the honour due to the Father of spirits, who hath

hath begotten us not to sufferings and to SERM.  
death, but to the blessed hope of everlasting XI.  
life and glory? Ye can scarcely be ignorant,   
that among the first things intended by  
honouring a parent, is imparting of our  
substance to his wants: but what can we  
perform towards our heavenly Father that  
is parallel to this? He stands not in need  
of our offerings, nor requires gifts at our  
hands. But does He not esteem what is  
given to our poor brethren as offered to  
Himself? Does He not consider every thing  
done for their assistance as ministered unto  
Him? In these things, then, behold a por-  
tion of the honour He requires! And re-  
collect, that as far as ye have neglected to  
communicate to the necessities of those who  
want, in proportion to your own ability to  
relieve them, so far may it be demanded of  
you in the name of the Lord, "Where is  
mine honour?"

I am aware, that by the limitation I have  
now expressed, there is considerable space  
left for evasion, and that where the will is  
wanting,

SERM. wanting, men will strive hard but they will  
XI. find pleas of inability. But this, alas! is  
but deceiving themselves. From Him who  
requires the honour, no power of paying  
it can be concealed; and for every man  
there is an easy and most apposite method  
of examining his own sincerity. Let him  
but put the question, if he his self were in  
narrow circumstances, and had a son capable  
of assisting him, what pleas for neglecting  
so to do would he think sufficient from his  
mouth? Would he deem him justified by  
urging, that if he assisted his father, he  
must visit the theatre so many times less in  
a season, or should be obliged to diminish  
the expence of his entertainments? I con-  
ceive not. How can ye yourselves then be  
justified, if your means of relieving the  
distressed be impaired by what is wasted in  
dissipation and useless pomp? If, in this  
point, therefore, ye would be blameless,  
fairly compare what ye expend in mere  
pleasure and the indulgences of vanity,  
(whether those indulgences consist in the  
parade of sumptuous entertainments, the  
often-



ostentation of costly garments, or the exhibition of a splendid equipage) with what ye distribute to the necessities of the indigent: assured, that unless the balance be considerably on the side of what ye gladly communicate, ye cannot be without rebuke.

SERM.

XI.

As, in our earthly fathers, there are many particulars beside their immediate pecuniary wants, in which our assistance may be requisite, so likewise as to those to whom whatsoever attention is shewed our heavenly Father will esteem as paid unto Himself, various are the modes by which we may most importantly help them: these require, however, the application of time, and that of a little exertion. And should we not deem it hard to have these refused us by our children? Or what should we think of that son who would be perpetually letting the trifles of life, (cards, I will suppose, or assemblies, parties of musick, or trivial conversation) draw him aside from the discharge of the sacred duties of life? Here, therefore, let me, as before, exhort you to

SERM. call to mind what portion of your time is  
XI. consumed in the useless avocations I have  
enumerated, that might more advantageously,  
and ought more properly to be employed,  
in contributing to the ease or benefit of your  
brethren ; and that ye may deal fairly in  
the accompt, recollect that ye must pass it  
again before the throne of God !

Another portion of the honour due to a  
parent, is a decent attention to his instructions ; and heavy are the chastisements  
threatened in the Scriptures, to those who  
treat the lessons of a father with contempt.  
And yet, I beseech you, what respect do  
they shew to the lessons of our heavenly  
Father, who are either negligent in going  
where they know they are to be delivered,  
or are guilty of the most listless behaviour  
when they are there, or treat what they  
have learned of them as of so little importance,  
that the least trouble is esteemed sufficient  
to prevent their performing them,  
and the least temptation a justification of  
their disobedience? Still we hear men,  
when

when defending their conduct, urge that SERM.  
they do no harm to any body, and other XI.  
the like pleas, as if to that particular  
of their misbehaviour, which is of the  
deepest criminality, their transgression of  
the divine injunctions, no guilt at all were  
attached. Henceforth let it not be so with  
you, but let this truth never depart from  
your minds, that whenever we sin, be our  
offence what it may, our crime is of in-  
evitable necessity, heightened by the guilt  
of trampling under foot the instructions of  
our Father which is in Heaven.

I shall make but one more observation on  
our conduct to God as our Father: the ge-  
nerality of mankind unite in condemning  
those children who scruple not to hurt the  
feelings of a parent; and is not what we  
are so strongly cautioned against in Scrip-  
ture, "grieving God's holy Spirit," analo-  
gous to this? Without entering into any  
abstruse speculations on the purity of the  
divine nature, that all sin is most highly  
offensive unto God, we have a most con-  
vincing



**SERM.** vincible assurance in the inestimable price  
**XI.** paid for man's redemption. There must be  
a peculiar malignity in that stain, which  
nothing less than the blood of the Son of  
God could wash out. But if sin be thus  
hateful in the sight of our heavenly Father,  
shall we pretend to honour Him, while we  
persist in the practice of it? Or will the  
stale purpose of future amendment repair  
the dishonour we continue to offer Him?  
Or, in truth, what does this purpose prove  
when executed, but giving ourselves to God,  
when we can no longer enjoy the world?  
and is not this offering to Him the lame and  
the blind, and the sick? Should ye be  
pleased with your own children, were they  
to bring you presents like these? Offer  
them now unto your earthly governours,  
will they be pleased with you, or accept  
your persons?

## SERMON XII.

ON THE IMMUTABILITY OF GOD.

---

NUMBERS XXIII. 19.

*God is not a man, that He should lie, neither  
the son of man, that He should repent:  
Hath He said, and shall He not do it?  
Or hath He spoken, and shall He not  
make it good?*

**W**HETHER it proceeded from observ- SERM.  
ing what passed in the world, or XII.  
from a traditional idea of the divine per-  
fections, there manifestly existed among the  
ancient Gentiles such a notion of the never-  
failing truth of the word of God, that they  
considered the decrees of Fate as immutable  
and uncontrollable. For although the true  
R 3' meaning

SERM. meaning was afterwards, in great measure,  
XII. forgotten, and there became attached unto  
it a confused idea of an unintelligible necessity considered as a cause in itself, that is, an obligation arising from nothing, it is plain, from the very term "Fate," which is a literal translation from a Latin word, signifying "that which has been spoken," that the persons which originally employed it, meant by it neither more nor less than a divine decree: and the sense they thus entertained of the immutability of what proceedeth out of the mouth of God, is perfectly consistent with our best notions of our Creatour's greatness, as taught in the sacred volume of Revelation, wherein we are told, that with Him, there is "neither variable-ness nor shadow of turning;" or as the same thing is expressed in the text, that "God is not a man, that He should lie, neither the son of man, that He should repent: Hath He said it, and shall He not do it? Or hath He spoken, and shall He not make it good?"

It



It is to this attribute of the Lord, His SERM.  
truth, that I now mean to speak, arranging XII.  
what I have to offer to your consideration  
concerning it under two heads, the one  
comprizing what relates to the perfection  
itself, the other containing the inferences  
that may be drawn from it more particularly  
interesting to ourselves.

1. The reasons immediately suggested in  
the text, why it is impossible that God  
should either lie or alter His decrees, are  
grounded solely on a most obvious truth,  
that He is far superiour to any thing like  
human infirmity. For not to descend to  
those falsities, which being intentional, pro-  
ceed from a wicked heart, men are fre-  
quently misled, by their want of foresight,  
to promise what in the event they find  
themselves totally incapable of performing :  
as, on the other hand, though having it in  
their power to accomplish their promises,  
they are not seldom prevented from so doing  
by other motives of action presenting them-  
selves, different from those by which they

SERM. were swayed when they engaged their  
XII. words. Now neither of these obstacles to  
truth can ever take place with respect to the  
Deity. Every possible circumstance of every  
case is, and has been visible to Him from  
all eternity ; no alterations, therefore, can  
become necessary in His provisions, no  
change can be requisite in His dispensations.  
Far removed from all imperfection, there  
is no mutability in His purposes ; He is  
absolutely the same in will, as well as in  
essence, from everlasting to everlasting :  
and as there is no variableness in Him, so  
the transcendancy of His power secures,  
against all opposition, the execution of His  
decrees ; and the unalterable laws of the  
universe are the eternal prescriptions of His  
will. How abhorrent, then, from the na-  
ture of such a Being, must be every degree  
of falshood ; all recourse to which does, in  
fact, proceed only from weakness, and al-  
ways brings with it an opprobrious self-  
conviction of being necessitated to recur to  
base means for the accomplishment of our  
purposes. Indeed, this feeling of shame,  
so

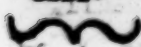
so naturally arising in our minds on every **SERM.**  
departure which we make from truth, yields **XII.**  
another proof of the odiousness of false-  
hood in the sight of our Creatour; since it  
is not to be believed, that He would have  
implanted in us a repugnance and contempt  
for aught but what was displeasing before  
Him. And therefore we may observe, in  
passing that what some persons, who for  
the most part merit a worse epithet than  
that of weak, are wont to affirm, that some  
untruths are innocent, is totally groundless;  
as no creature can ever be guiltless who  
commits what is inconsistent with the natu-  
ral dictates of its own mind when yet un-  
corrupted, and abominable in the eyes of  
his Maker. If it be in a serious matter  
that these defenders of unrighteousness re-  
cur to misrepresentation, what faith do they  
manifest in the Lord, who, instead of trust-  
ing for success to Him, put their cause at  
once out of His patronage! and if it be for  
amusement that they thus exercise their in-  
vention, how contemptibly shallow must  
be their information, how confined their  
know-



**SERM.** knowledge, who cannot find sufficient sub-  
**XII.** jects for common conversation, nor sufficient means to relax their minds from severer pursuits, without turning to lies for their diversion! On the attention of such in particular should the words of St. John be pressed, "that no lie is of the truth:" and on the hearts of all should be imprinted those passages of holy writ which support the reasoning I have now set before you, by declaring, that every thing which partakes of falsehood is totally inconsistent with the perfection of God, and contrary to the glory of His nature. In that song which the Lord commanded Moses to teach the children of Israel, as a witness for Himself against them, He declares Himself to be "a God of truth:" (Deut. xxxii. 4.) and by the prophet Jeremiah it is still more pointedly pronounced, "the Lord is God of truth." (Jer. x. 10.) In conformity with which, St. Paul, writing to Titus, uses the phrase, "God that cannot lie." And every thing that favours of falsehood, is declared to be hateful unto Him: "Solomon,

mon, in Proverbs the viii. says, that " the SERM.  
Lord hateth a lying tongue:" and in Pro- XII.  
verbs xii. 22. " Lying lips are an abomi-  
nation to the Lord." And another source  
is, by our blessed Saviour, assigned for lies;  
even the Devil, who, " when he speaketh  
a lie, speaketh of his own; for he is a liar,  
and the father of it."

2. Thus our Almighty Governour not  
only being far removed from every degree  
of imperfection which might lead to a de-  
viation from truth, but from the holiness  
of His nature, having in abomination what-  
ever is false, it of course follows, that in  
all His dispensations, truth will everlastingly  
prevail: an inference, containing conse-  
quences of the utmost importance to our-  
selves. For first, since this is the case,  
" Hath He said, and shall He not do it?"  
are not all His menaces against sin, which  
the sons of men are wont so madly to dare,  
intended to be executed? Look then into  
your Bibles, and there ye will find Him  
declaring, that however merciful in pardon-  
ing

**SERM.** ing those who sincerely repent, however  
**XII.** extensive His forbearance to those of whose  
 amendment there remains an hope, He will yet by no means clear the guilty. Ye will there find indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, denounced against every soul of man that doeth evil. What hope of escape, therefore, for transgressors from punishments, for the execution of which stands thus pledged the truth of Him who cannot lie! What ground can present impunity yield to look for a final release! Various, ye will say, are the arguments by which men encourage themselves to hope for this. But whatever may be their variety, they may all be obviated by the single position, that the word of God is true. Let us suppose, for instance, that an offender in respect to the personal vices, (since they are they for which these pleas are most usually urged) should say, that the general menaces against sinners reach not to him, for his commissions hurt no one but himself; would his assumed innocence with regard to others, (for it is, in fact, only assumed,



assumed, being far from real) preserve him SERM.  
from the condemnation threatened in the XII.  
sentence, “without holiness no man shall  
see the Lord?” Or, in other words, if  
this last declaration be true, is it not im-  
possible, that those who will not purify  
themselves, should enter into the kingdom  
of Heaven? This, indeed, ye may reply, is  
what very few will acknowledge. But  
“let God be true, and every man be a liar.”  
The reasonings of His creatures cannot  
reach the fixed certainty of His word; and  
when once that can be produced for confir-  
mation, there is an end of all reasonable  
debate. Be it allowed, that your offences  
appear venial to yourself: be it granted,  
that to you the penalties seem dispropor-  
tionate to the transgressions; shall your self-  
partiality render null the divine award? Or  
shall your imaginations cause His truth to  
fail?

Did we call you to go on to perfection  
on lower authority than we do; did we in-  
sist on your renouncing the world and the  
flesh,

**SERM.** flesh, and produce not the command of God  
**XII.** for it, ye might perhaps be at liberty to  
say, that a prize less high than that we  
propose would content you, provided less  
exertions were necessary to gain it: and this,  
possibly, is one reason why the divine au-  
thority is interposed. But since it is on  
that we address you, if ye listen not to the  
call, ye must suffer the threatened inflic-  
tions; because the word of Him who has  
denounced them cannot fail.

To whatever other pleas, whether of  
temptation or infirmity, men may advance  
for impunity to their sins, the same reply  
may still be made: for He who knew long  
before all that can be urged in their excuse,  
has yet thought fit to permit the sentence to  
go out of His mouth; and “hath He said  
it, and shall He not do it?”

Great, indeed, if properly considered,  
will appear the presumption of those who  
endeavour to palliate any practices which  
Revelation condemns, or to fortify them-  
selves

selves and others against those terrours, SERM.  
which it holds out to all who continue in XII.  
them: for what less do such persons do,  
than controvert the truth of the divine de-  
clarations? Yet very numerous is the gene-  
ration who scruple not to deal in these pro-  
fane babblings. Consider, for a moment,  
whether ye yourselves have never been  
guilty of this. Have ye not, at times, ar-  
gued, that offences which ye yet know are in  
the Gospel ranked among those which pre-  
clude men from everlasting happiness, are  
yet so common, or so trifling, that it can  
hardly be supposed, that God will visit for  
them. Absurd as it may appear on repeti-  
tion, recollect, if you have never made use  
of the argument, surely there can be no  
harm in what every body does. Or that  
equally preposterous one, it cannot be be-  
lieved, that a Being of infinite mercy will  
punish everlastingly the crimes of so short-  
lived a creature as man: if ye have, now  
call to mind, how directly contrary is this  
your doctrine to that of Him who spake the  
word of the Father, and said, " Whoso-  
ever,



**BERM.** ever, therefore, shall break one of these  
**XII.** *least* commandments, and shall teach men  
 so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of Heaven:" (St. Matt. v. 19.) and farther declared, that those who are cast out of that kingdom, shall "go into Hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched."

To awaken our attention to the truth of this, and all the other divine menaces, and convince us by the testimony of facts, that if the Lord hath said, He will do it; many of His judgments in the earth have been foretold long before they took place; but those most obvious to your observation, and of the actual infliction of which ye can most easily obtain the proofs, are the evils with which He threatened His own people of Israel, if they obeyed not the law which Moses set before them. Other instances of these ye may seek in your Bibles: I shall select only one for your consideration at present, but that such as is peculiarly fitted to

to

to prove, that the severity of the threatened judgment is by no mean a ground for hoping that it will not be executed. In the

SERM.

XII.

xxviiiith chapter of Deuteronomy, there is recorded a menace of the bitterest affliction, which, it should seem, can well fall to human lot, that of a mother being driven by famine to devour her own children.

“ The tender and delicate woman among you,” saith Moses, “ which would not adventure to set her foot upon the ground for delicateness and tenderness, her eye shall be evil toward the husband of her bosom, and toward her son, and toward her daughter, and toward her young one that cometh out from between her feet, and toward her children which she shall bear : for she shall eat them for want of all things, secretly in the siege, and straitness wherewith thine enemy shall distress thee in thy gates :”

ver. 56, 7. And thus we read, that in the siege of Samaria, when, on a woman’s crying for help to the king of Israel, he asked, “ What aileth thee ?” She answered, “ This woman said unto me, Give thy son, that

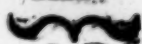
SERM. we may eat him to-day, and we will eat  
XII. my son to-morrow. So we boiled my son,  
and did eat him: and I said unto her on  
the next day, Give thy son, that we may  
eat him: and she hath hid her son.”  
(2 Kings vi. 28, 29.) And we learn from  
the Jewish historian Josephus, that in the  
last siege of Jerusalem, recourse was had to  
the same shocking mode of support: for  
he relates, in his sixth book of the Jewish  
war, that a woman, remarkable both for  
family and wealth, being repeatedly robbed  
both of goods and provision, by the wretches  
who then tyrannized over that devoted city,  
was at length reduced by despair, to put  
her sucking child to death, and having  
dressed it, she ate one half, the other she  
concealed; when a party of those who had  
thrown the city into confusion, and made it  
a scene of anarchy, entered her house, and  
smelling the scent of her abominable repast,  
threatened to murder her if she did not dis-  
cover what food she had prepared, on which  
she shewed them the fragments of her  
horrid



horrid meal, the yet uneaten remains of her slaughtered infant.

SERM.

XII.



And now having before you these instances of the severity of God on those who continue in sin, consider seriously what, consistently with the truth of the menaces of the Holy Scriptures, must await the disobedient part of the sons of Adam; and to give this consideration its due effect, keep the words of the text deeply infixed in your minds, "God is not a man that He should lie, neither the son of man that He should repent: Hath He said, and shall He not do it? Or hath He spoken, and shall He not make it good?"

Blessed, however, be His holy name. The immutability of His purposes is not more manifest in His visitations on our iniquities than in the duration of His mercy. To this His prophet doth, in His name, bear witness; "For I am the Lord, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed." In testimony of this the psalmist

**SERM.** had before quoted the experience of His  
**XII.** people, in that affecting hymn in which  
every verse is closed with this assertion of  
the Lord's never-failing goodness, "for  
His mercy endureth for ever." And this  
the apostle teaches, when he says, "the  
gifts and calling of God are without re-  
pentance." (Rom. xi. 29.) For He had  
promised Jacob, in the day that He revealed  
Himself unto him in Bethel, "that He  
would not leave him until He had done that  
which He had spoken to him of;" and,  
therefore, though by the time of our Savi-  
our's appearance, the number of the chil-  
dren of Israel was as that of the stars of  
Heaven, and yet very small was the rem-  
nant that had not gone out of the way, He  
turned not away the presence of His anointed,  
but the election obtained what they sought  
for, and through them the salvation of the  
Lord was made known unto the Gentiles;  
and thus the first fruit being holy, the lump  
is also holy, and in God's good time, that  
blindness, which hath in so great part hap-  
pened unto Israel, will be taken away, and  
" the

“ the Deliverer coming out of Sion, shall SERM.  
turn away ungodliness from Jacob.” A XII.  
strong pledge of which is given to the world  
before our own eyes in the Jews yet continu-  
ing separate from all other people of the  
earth, and therefore capable of being re-  
stored according to the prophecies gone be-  
fore concerning them, while there is now  
actually accomplishing on them that of the  
prophet Hosea ; “ For the children of Israel  
shall abide many days without a king, and  
without a prince, and without a sacrifice,  
and without an image, and without an  
ephod, and without teraphim :” as pre-  
ceding the completion of the words imme-  
diately subjoined ; “ Afterward shall the  
children of Israel return, and seek the Lord  
their God, and David their king ; and shall  
fear the Lord and His goodness in the latter  
days.” (Hof. iii. 4, 5.)

When, therefore, we thus see that the  
promises of God in Christ are Yea, and in  
Him, Amen, what trust ought we not to  
have through Him to Godward ? Wonder-



**SERM.** ful, indeed, are the things which He hath  
**XII.** done for us, and inconceivably great those  
which He hath promised yet to do; but  
for the reality of both we have His word;  
and He is not a man, that He should vaunt  
benefits He hath not conferred; nor a son  
of man, that He should utter promises never  
to be realized. Yet since He has spoken,  
do not they, in fact, charge Him with the  
former, who will not receive, in its fullest  
extent, all He has revealed concerning the  
mystery of human redemption? and do not  
they suggest the latter, who will not believe  
all He hath spoken concerning that king-  
dom of righteousness, which He hath com-  
manded the faithful to expect? I will not  
say it is a feigned humility under which  
men act, when they plead their own un-  
worthiness for doubting the representations  
given us in holy writ of what God has  
done, or will hereafter do for us; but,  
surely, it would be more becoming grate-  
fully to receive, or thankfully expect a  
blessing, than to dispute the unbounded

goodness, or controvert the perfect truth of **SERM.**  
Him from whom it proceeds.

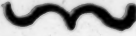
**XII.**



“ Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings, and not one of them is forgotten before God? But even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not, therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows.” Such are the encouraging terms in which we are animated by the divine Captain of our salvation, to look up for protection under the greatest dangers with which we can meet. And can ye, after this, suppose yourselves to be deserted of God, because ye find that ye have perils to encounter, and difficulties with which to struggle, without disputing His truth? All the disciples of Christ are taught to take up their cross, and follow Him, who, through sufferings, made His way to glory. As long, then, as ye confide in God, can ye doubt whither tend the trials ye are now made to undergo? Do Him but the justice to believe, that He has truly described

**SERM.** the principles of His own government of  
**XII.** men, given a fair account of the end sought  
in the discipline to which He has subjected  
us, and promised us no greater rewards,  
than He has really prepared for those who,  
by patient continuance in well-doing, seek  
for the glory He has set before them.  
Render him but what is due, in acknow-  
ledging that all things work together as He  
hath declared they should, for good to those  
that believe, and ye will unfold to your-  
selves such a comment on what befalls you  
in the present state, gain such an explanation  
of what is passing in the world, and open to  
yourselves so sure a prospect of honour, hap-  
piness, and immortality, ready to be revealed  
before men and angels, as soon as the small  
remainder of the line of prophecy He hath  
been pleased to give, shall be accomplished,  
as will not only encourage you to bear up  
with firmness against the evils of the pre-  
sent troublous times, but filling your hearts  
with all joy and peace in believing, cause  
you to haste unto the coming of the day  
of the revelation of Jesus Christ, of which  
ye



ye have received an infallible pledge in the **SERM.**  
word of Him, who “ is not a man, that **XII.**  
He should lie, or a son of man, that He   
should repent ;” but “ the Lord, holy and  
true, who keepeth his promise for ever.”

**SER.**

we have received an infallible pledge in the  
 word of him, who "is not a man, that he  
 should lie, or a son of man, that he  
 should repent," but "the Lord, holy and  
 true, who keepeth his promise for ever."

## SERMON XIII.

ON THE OMNIPRESENCE OF GOD.

---

JEREMIAH XXIII, 24.

*Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him? saith the Lord. Do not I fill heaven and earth? saith the Lord.*

**T**HERE is no divine attribute of the SERM.  
reality of which men seem more gene- XIII.  
rally sensible than they are of that here re-  
ferred to, the universal presence of God. For  
though there may be, in the account we have  
of some tribe of savages, mention of their, at  
times, covering the object of their worship,  
that it may not see what they do, idolaters,  
as well as others, have, with very little  
exception, ever considered it impossible to  
conceal



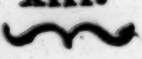
SERM. conceal their actions from the eye of Heaven. Hence, in every age, the restless terrors of the guilty, and the anxious appeals of injured innocence, to an invisible Judge. And as there is no impression on the human mind more general than this, so is there scarcely any more difficult to be eradicated. We read, indeed, of men so hardened by vice, as to say, "How doth God know, and is there knowledge in the Most High?" and blasphemous speeches of the kind may not be uncommon among the profane effusions of a debauch. But when solitude or distress, by diminishing the redundancy of the animal spirits, gives the genuine sentiments of the soul opportunity to exert themselves, not a particle of what was uttered in the hours of intemperance, but is acknowledged to be recorded before the Lord, and to stand as evidence against the guilty. Considerable is the check that libertinism hence receives, and not less salutary the encouragement derived from hence also to truth and virtue. Wherefore it becomes us to preserve so beneficial an impression on  
our

our minds, by taking into our consideration SERM.  
the reality of what it suggests to us, and I XIII.  
shall accordingly make it my business, in  
the ensuing discourse, to set before you the  
certainty of God's omnipresence ; as mani-  
fested both by arguments founded on the  
divine perfection, and by the declarations of  
Scripture.

Now when we speak of God's being  
present every where, we do not mean to  
say, that He is witness to our words and  
actions only, but that He penetrates like-  
wise into the most secret imaginations of  
our hearts ; and though it may be difficult,  
nay, perhaps impossible, for us truly to  
comprehend an excellence so high, yet the  
essential perfection of the divine nature ne-  
cessarily embraces this, as well as every  
other particular, of which the absence  
would imply any the least degree of imper-  
fection. For no being can be absolutely  
perfect who could, in any possible case,  
need the assistance of another ; which might  
happen to one, without whose immediate  
know-

**SERM.** knowledge any thought could, at any time,  
**XIII.** pass in any mind. Again; if we acknow-  
ledge not the reality of this attribute of  
God, we must suppose, that in His creation  
He did not provide for the most perfect  
government of His creatures, but left some  
of them the power of planning evil to  
others, and of making their own minds  
storehouses of impurity, without being  
liable to His inspection. Nay, we must  
deny Him the power which is most neces-  
sary for the improvement and exaltation of  
His moral creatures, and absolutely requi-  
site to complete the character of the Judge  
of all the earth. And as the consideration  
of the divine perfection thus manifests to  
us the certainty of the omnipresence of  
God, so His own declarations, made through  
His prophets, confirm it. Thus by Jere-  
miah, in the words of the text; "Can  
any hide himself in secret places that I shall  
not see him? saith the Lord. Do not I fill  
heaven and earth? saith the Lord." And  
by David, in his admonition to his son  
Solomon; "For the Lord searcheth all  
hearts,

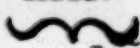


hearts, and understandeth all the imagina- SERM.  
tions of the thoughts. If thou seek Him, XIII.  
He will be found of thee; but if thou   
forsake Him, He will cast thee off for ever.”  
(1 Chron. xxviii. 9.) And before, in those  
well known and beautiful verses of the  
thirty-ninth psalm: “ O Lord, thou hast  
searched me out, and known me. Thou  
knowest my down sitting and mine uprising.  
Thou understandest my thoughts afar off.  
Thou compassed my path, and my lying  
down, and art acquainted with all my ways.  
For there is not a word in my tongue, but,  
lo, O Lord, Thou knowest it altogether.  
Thou hast beset me behind and before, and  
laid thine hand upon me. Such knowledge  
is too wonderful for me; it is high; I  
cannot attain unto it. Whither shall I go  
from thy Spirit? or whither shall I flee from  
thy presence? If I ascend up <sup>into</sup> Heaven,  
Thou art there: if I make up my bed in  
Hell, Behold, Thou art there. If I take  
the wings of the morning, and dwell in the  
uttermost parts of the sea; even there shall  
thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall  
hold

**SERM.** hold me. If I say, Surely, the darkness  
**XIII.** shall cover me; even the night shall be  
light about me. Yea, the darkness hideth  
not from Thee; but the night shineth as  
the day: the darkness and the light are both  
alike to Thee." And again, by the prophet  
Jeremiah: "I the Lord search the heart;  
I try the reins, even to give every man ac-  
cording to his ways, and according to the  
fruit of his doings." (Jer. xvii. 10.)

After hearing these declarations, does there not arise in your minds a sentiment analogous to that expressed by Jacob, when he awaked from his miraculous dream; "Surely the Lord is in this place, and I knew it not:" and he was afraid, and said, "How dreadful is this place." The reflection, that the eyes of the Sovereign of the universe are ever upon us, those eyes which are too pure to behold iniquity without being offended thereat, naturally suggests an anxious enquiry, how far our conduct is capable of enduring such inspection? and manifests the awfulness of the situation  
in

in which we stand, while, with all our im-  
perfections, the unerring judgment of the  
Lord God is incessantly exercised upon us.

SERM.  
XIII.  


This consideration, in the first place, en-  
creases the reproach of every injurious,  
every unbecoming act. If the oppressor  
plunder the helpless, or afflict the destitute,  
does it not add to the heinousness of his  
crime, that it was perpetrated before the  
face of Him, who has declared Himself to  
be the Avenger of all such? If the dis-  
obedient, or unruly, insult their superiours;  
if the arrogant and intemperate revile their  
equals, is it not a circumstance of addi-  
tional guilt, that these breaches of the di-  
vine law were committed in the very pre-  
sence of the Lawgiver Himself? And how  
much more is this the case in those offences  
which are peculiarly levied against the  
Deity Himself? acts of impiety, I mean,  
and speeches of profaneness! The fear  
justly entertained by the tender-hearted, for  
the horrible fate of those wretches who do  
what in them lies to deprive the Almighty  
of the honour due unto His name, will be



SERM. greatly encreased, if there be taken into  
XIII. contemplation this aggravating circumstance  
of their conduct, that their ceaseless efforts to deprive Him of the homage of His creatures are exerted under His own eye. And the horror raised in sober breasts, by the blasphemous effusions of scoffers, will not reach its greatest height, unless it be recollected, that He, against Whom they so madly wag their tongues, is a present witness to the dishonour offered to Himself. Highly salutary would be the tendency of similar reflections on those who are engaged in meetings of festivity, or scenes of dissipation. For, surely, gluttony and drunkenness, lasciviousness, pride, and folly, would receive a check by the recollection, that an observing eye, and attentive ear, let neither deed nor word pass unregarded; and particularly in many scenes of at best idle amusement, a much more becoming proportion of the sacred order would probably be seen, were they to call to mind that He is looking on them, Who, if He rebuked them in the style in which He, by  
His

His prophets, reproved those who formerly waited at His altar, might mark their characters in terms like these, “ Such are thy watchmen, O Zion !”

SERM.  
XIII.  


Capable, however, of striking us with terror, as is this attribute of God, it is no less calculated to raise in our minds the most animating confidence. How full of consolation is the thought, that He is not only our refuge and strength, but a *very present* help in time of trouble ! That He not only looketh on our affliction, but on the plots of those who are planning evil against us ; and while He beholds their mischievous intentions, sees too the means of defence which we possess. Hence are the counsels of the wicked often so suddenly overthrown ; hence are men frequently rescued, when their situations appear even desperate ; and many times delivered from imminent dangers of very existence of which they themselves were insensible ! How futile are the most deep laid schemes of policy, how useless the most vigorous preparations

SERM. for war, unless favourably regarded by that  
XIII. eye which thus watches over all ! And how  
easily may those, in whose favour it wakes,  
triumph over their adversaries, and be ex-  
alted above all that would oppress them !

But if the recollection of the uninterrupted presence of God in general, tends to affect our minds in the manner now mentioned, that of His more especial regard to particular places, is a subject of consideration neither less awful nor less encouraging. “ Where two or three, saith our Lord, are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.” (Matt. xviii. 20.) And ought we to think lightly of the sanctity of assemblies thus hallowed by the gracious attention of Him, “ in Whom dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily ?” Or could men, who think as they ought to think of the situation in which they stand, when appearing in the church of Christ, permit themselves to be guilty of any irreverend, any careless behaviour ? Consider, when ye enter into the house of  
the



the Lord, the eye of God Himself is ex-  
amining the worth, the sincerity of your  
sacrifice. Before that which judges per-  
fectly, even the demeanour of the offerers  
cannot pass unobserved. When in the pre-  
sence of those who are your equals by na-  
ture, and superiour to you only in temporary  
rank, if you perceive the eyes of one of  
them fixed on you, does it not immediately  
produce a fear, that there may be something  
in your conduct or appearance, that attracts  
such attention; and are you not sensible of  
uneasiness and anxiety as long as they con-  
tinue unremoved, and solicitous, lest you  
should be guilty of a gesture, or a look,  
that may be considered as improper in your  
situation. Indulge, then, but this feeling  
of nature in the more important case; con-  
sider yourself, when you are in the church,  
as having the eye of Him, for whose wor-  
ship you repair thither, constantly bent on  
you, and marking the degree of propriety,  
attention, and reverence, with which you  
behave; and you will not easily suffer your-  
self to be betrayed into either of the species

**SERM.** of misbehaviour which disgrace our religious assemblies, by, on the one hand, neglecting your own, and disturbing the devotions of others, by conversing or looking around you ; or, on the other, by a listless demeanour, which manifests, that your resort thither is merely on account of custom, or repose. And if your worship be thus freed from what must render it unacceptable before Him who judgeth righteously, what degree of encouragement may ye not derive from knowing that He to whom ye address yourselves is not afar off, but present to receive your supplications, and regard the sincerity, the humility, and the ardour with which ye prefer them. That no article of your petitions passes unheard, no plea ye use fails of attention. Reflect but on these truths, and ye will be convinced, that opportunity of entering these assemblies thus blessed with the particular presence of the Lord, is not only not to be neglected, but to be prized most highly, and improved most earnestly.

But

But while enquiring into this attribute of **SERM.**  
our divine Creatour, ought we not further **XIII.**  
to consider, that the accuracy of the inspection we undergo must be estimated by His perfection? and, consequently, that neither the closest privacy of retirement can hide us from His sight, nor the utmost craft of dissimulation conceal our thoughts from Him? “Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him? saith the Lord.” “Hell and destruction are before the Lord: How much more, then, the hearts of the children of men?” (Prov. xv. 11.) How little, alas! is the knowledge of this intimate presence of our Judge cultivated by the sons of men! Otherwise, could the world furnish the very numerous instances it does of crimes brought to light, which the guilty imagined they had so secretly committed as to be secure from detection? When the midnight thief, under covert of the darkness, goes forth to plunder, saying, “No eye shall see me;” would he not, oftentimes, be checked in his nefarious purposes, were it to occur to him,



SERM. that every step he takes, every turn he  
XIII. makes, he is still closely watched by Him,  
who hateth ungodliness and wrong? When  
the faithless servant pilfers from his master,  
and thinks the trifle he steals will not be  
missed from the heap from which he takes it,  
could he, with so little apprehension, dare  
to break the eighth commandment, were  
he at the time aware, that however his  
transgression may remain concealed from  
others, yet the Maker of the law will here-  
after convict him of the breach of it under  
his own sight? Neither, in other cases,  
where the groundless hope of concealment  
yields encouragement to sin, could it well  
fail to operate as a restraint on the guilty,  
were they to recollect, that the inmost  
chambers cannot conceal their deeds from  
the sight of Him, who hath declared, that  
“there is nothing covered, that shall not  
be revealed; neither hid, that shall not be  
known. Therefore whatsoever ye have  
spoken in darkness, shall be heard in the  
light; and that which ye have spoken in  
the ear in closets, shall be proclaimed upon  
the

the house tops." (Luke xii. 2, 3.) On the SERM.  
other hand, under afflictions which the suf- XIII.  
ferers are unwilling to disclose, because they  
have little reason to hope, that their case  
would meet with commiseration in the  
world, what consolation may be drawn from  
knowing, that He who seeth not as man  
seeth, has an eye upon all their sufferings,  
and an ear open to all their complaints!  
And thus, though the injured and the op-  
pressed have none on earth to whom they  
can venture to disclose their sorrows, though  
the mourner is constrained to vent his tears  
in private, yet neither do the distresses of  
the former pass unregarded; nor do the  
griefs of the latter go unnoticed: since they  
have both a sure refuge in Him that is  
higher than the highest. It is an observa-  
tion of Solomon, applicable to the point be-  
fore us, that "all the ways of a man are  
clean in his own eyes; but the Lord weigh-  
eth the spirits." (Prov. xvi. 2.) For must  
it not be confessed, that men are not only  
capable of imposing on others, by feigning  
motives of action different from those by  
which

SARAH. which they are really swayed, but able  
XIII. likewise to deceive themselves, by assuming  
worthy reasons for their conduct, when in truth they have been led by others far from laudable; and under the persuasion, that their estimate is just, to stifle all remorse for what would otherwise have naturally produced it. Yet what avails this species of deception before Him who weigheth the spirits? Present even to our thoughts, He sees the duplicity which we ourselves succeed but too well in overlooking; and though the pretenders to virtuous motives may support their false claim until they themselves believe it, the corrupt source from whence their actions flow continues visible to Him. This lesson, therefore, should never depart from our minds, that God penetrates to the inmost recesses of our hearts, constantly observing whether that truth exists there, which He requireth in the inward parts. Since, as the recollection of this will teach us not to content ourselves with making a few feeble exertions against temptation, and if it give not way to  
to



to them, supposing we have yet performed SERM.  
our duty ; as it will instruct us not to con- XIII.  
clude, that the task of conquering our evil  
affections, and vicious habits, is impossible,  
because it is difficult : so will it console us  
under those cruel misinterpretations which  
ignorance or malice may put upon our con-  
duct ; by assuring us, that our real motives  
are noted before Him whose mercy will  
vindicate the innocent, and rescue His ser-  
vants from reproach.

Thus does this attribute of our great  
Creatour yield equal ground for fear and  
for consolation ; and the due consideration  
of it will impress upon our minds the  
justice of those exhortations by which the  
sacred writers, on the one hand, admonish  
us to be circumspect in all things, preserving  
purity even in our thoughts ; and, on the  
other, calling on us not to permit any dan-  
gers, however imminent, to diminish our  
confidence in the divine protection. For if  
we be thus subject to incessant, and the  
most intimate inspection, does it not behove  
us

SERM. us to strive to make ourselves able to endure  
XIII. it? Or what are our reasons for concealing  
our vicious inclinations, and hiding from  
the world our evil deeds? Is it not to avoid  
either disappointment, shame, or punishment?  
But are we not exposed to these as long as the Judge of all the earth is acquainted with our intentions, and our works? How little the advantage, then, of being able to keep them from the knowledge of our fellow-creatures? Is wickedness less abominable in His sight than in their's? Or, do they possess better means of bringing the guilty to punishment than He doth? Surely, then, no safety can be found in concealment, That can be secured by innocence alone; and the impurities of the intemperate, the frauds of the impostor, the robberies of the thief, the petty dishonesties of the pilferer, and the malicious falsehoods of the slanderer, will all be published before men and angels, unless the sincere repentance of the guilty prevail through the mediation of their Saviour, to cause their iniquity to be forgiven, and their sins to be covered.

covered. Or why, when surrounded by SERM. difficulties, and menaced by greater distress, XIII. are our spirits cast down, and our hearts ready to faint under our afflictions, but because we know of no friend at hand powerful and willing to relieve us? Yet unless the Lord's ear is heavy that it cannot hear, or His hand shortened that it cannot save, of what importance is the want of any other friend? Is not He alone able to deliver us? Or is any thing too hard for Him, Who, while He dwelleth in the high and lofty place, abides with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit?

Let us then seriously consider with whom we have to do; with One, to transgress whose laws, in any particular, is to offend Him to the face; to doubt whose almighty power, or to mistrust whose perfect goodness, is to insult Him little otherwise than personally: for we cannot here, as we frequently do, when, conscious of having been guilty of some misbehaviour towards men, console ourselves with saying, " Well, I  
am



**ABRAHAM** am glad he did not see it!" Not, as in  
**XIII.** heavier offences, "It is well it was not  
 found out!" And, therefore, on account  
 of this attribute of the Lord, no less than  
 on that of any other, it becometh us most  
 anxiously "to keep innocence, and take  
 heed to the thing that is right."

## SERMON XIV.

ON THE PROVIDENCE OF GOD.

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MATT. VI. 34.

*Take therefore no thought for the morrow:  
for the morrow shall take thought for the  
things of itself. Sufficient for the day is  
the evil thereof.*

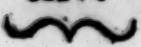
THE beneficial alteration which would SERM.  
necessarily take place in the world, XIV.  
were this precept of our blessed Saviour  
universally obeyed, is scarcely to be esti-  
mated: for to what is to be attributed, not  
only a very considerable portion of the frauds  
and dishonesty practised among men, but  
the clashing of interests, and the strife for  
gain, which occasion so many animosities;  
consume so much time, and embitter so  
many

**SERM.** many tempers, nay, harden so many hearts,  
**XIV.** but to a too great anxiety to secure a reserve of treasure for the morrow? Were this solicitude removed, how void of care would be the breasts of many, how would their hearts be enlarged, how free from restraint would become their conversation, how pleasant their society! Can, then, our all-glorious Creatour have so constituted the world, as to render necessary a degree of anxiety which corrupts the individual, and derogates from the general comfort? and is it in this fordid sense that every man is instructed to look to his own ways? Or does not, on the contrary, the frequency with which this carefulness misses its end demonstrate, that it is not the method in which the Maker of the race hath ordained, that we should secure the things that are needful for us here? The strong and repeated admonitions we thus receive, plainly indicate to us the superintendence of an invifible hand more powerful than our own, and afford a convincing argument, that the sons of men are intended for religious beings,



beings, whose it is to look for support and SERM.  
protection in the power and goodness of XIV.  
their divine Governour: in conformity with  
which lesson of nature, and in elucidation  
of it, the Holy Scriptures teach us to place  
the most implicit and ample confidence in  
the providence of God; and particularly in  
the words of our Lord Himself we are in-  
structed to argue from the visible provision  
which our heavenly Father has made for  
inferiour animals, that our necessities are  
not overlooked by Him, and consequently  
to divest ourselves of all anxious solicitude  
as to future supplies of them. “Behold  
the fowls of the air; for they sow not,  
neither do they reap, nor gather into barns;  
yet your heavenly Father feedeth them.  
Are ye not much better than they?” (Matt.  
vi. 26.) And again, as to dangers with  
which we are threatened: “Are not five  
sparrows sold for two farthings? and not  
one of them is forgotten before God. But  
even the very hairs of your head are all  
numbered. Fear not, therefore; ye are of

SERM. more value than many sparrows." (Luke  
xiv. xii. 6, 7.)



Now against the trials of adversity, against the threatening appearances that the world around us sometimes exhibits, what consolation so encouraging as that of knowing that the goodness of God takes our case into consideration, and that, in the words of the psalmist, "the angel of the Lord encampeth about them that fear Him." That we may not be without this consolation, when we stand in need of it, let us now consider, what is properly to be understood by the providence of God, and what the sacred writings teach concerning the exercise of it.

The providence of God, is that care of His creatures which necessarily results from His universal knowledge, His almighty power, and His perfect goodness: for since no circumstance, however small, no event, however distant in futurity, is unknown to Him,

Him, since no case of distress, however SERM.  
complicated, is too hard for Him to relieve XIV.  
it even with a word, and His moral attribute of mercy is no more limited than His natural ones of knowledge and might, where but from the ill deserts of the object can there be a case to which His interposition will not extend? The objections which have been raised against this doctrine of the universality of the divine Providence, are founded in unworthy conceptions of the perfection of God. Some of the ancient Heathens, consistently with the blindness that was in them, imagined, that any regard to human affairs was incompatible with that uninterrupted happiness in which all acknowledge the Deity must ever dwell: others allowed the interference of Heaven in the more important transactions of mankind, as the rise of states, the fall of kingdoms, and the like, but thought that their supreme God had not leisure to attend to matters of less consequence. Such opinions, I say, accord well with the times of pagan ignorance; but that they should be received



SERM. and propagated (as they have been) among  
XIV. any who pretend to christianity, is matter  
of little less wonder than regret. The truth  
of a particular providence has, in a work\*  
read by too many at an age when they are  
neither aware of the tendency of its maxims,  
nor armed against its sophistry, been stigmatized with the epithet of partial, and the  
power of the Almighty to deliver His servants, has been measured by the shallow  
conception of a human brain. Yet, in the  
name of common sense, how can that be  
perfect in which any thing is wanting?  
And is there not something wanting in  
knowledge and power that are not universal?  
and in goodness too, which does not act in  
every instance where it is accompanied with  
power so to do? Behold, then, to what  
the denial of an universal Providence extends; even to that of the divine perfection!  
and turning from the confused babblings of  
men, who distinguish not between general  
and universal, or partial and particular, to

\* The Essay on Man.

the

the sure light of revelation, mark both in SERM.  
the records and lessons of that the most XIV.  
satisfactory assurances, that the providence  
of our heavenly Father extendeth with no  
less effect to the concerns of individuals,  
than that with which it reaches to the fates  
of nations and of empires. When, through  
the exaltation of his son Joseph, Jacob and  
his family were, during a long dearth,  
nourished in Egypt, we acknowledge the  
hand of Providence in preserving the fathers  
of a nation. And when the servant of  
Abraham, who was sent to procure a wife  
for his master's son from among his kindred,  
preferred his prayer to the Almighty, that  
He would send him good speed, and shew  
kindness unto his master Abraham, in grant-  
ing that the damsel who should courteously  
answer his request to give him to drink,  
should be the same that He had appointed  
for a wife to Isaac, we see the same hand  
directing the enquiry, and diminishing the  
labour of an individual.

SERM.

XIV.

When, by the mouth of Elijah, the land had been smitten with a drought, the prophet himself was supported by the ministry of ravens. But is this, ye would say, an instance for general encouragement? An apostle quotes the prevalence of the same prophet's prayers as an example for us, observing, that Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are. In proof that the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much, why may we not then, by parity of reasoning, argue from the provision thus made for him to God's care of all His servants? The same prophet declared to the widow of Zarephath, "Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, the barrel of meal shall not waste, neither shall the cruse of oil fail, until the day that the Lord sendeth rain upon the earth. And the barrel of meal wasted not, neither did the cruse of oil fail." (1 Kings xvii. 14—16.) This, likewise, was an extraordinary mode of relief; but was there in it any thing more difficult to the hand that gave it, than exists in the ordinary course of His providence?

Con-



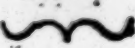
Consider the subject well, and ye will find, **SERM.**  
that the miracle consists more in the singu- **XIV.**  
larity of the work, than in the superiority  
of the power displayed. Recollect how  
many parts of the material world necessarily  
co-operate in producing the meal and the  
oil we use, the sun, the earth, the air, the  
rain; and in the creation and support of  
these, is less power to be supposed than in  
causing the barrel to waste not, and the  
cruze to fail not? Or, reflect on the course  
of most men's fortunes, and how often does  
it happen, that supplies, which at first ap-  
pear entirely inadequate to their wants, are,  
in a strange manner, eked out beyond all  
reasonable expectation, until the Lord send-  
eth, as it were, rain upon earth.

Ye have heard of the afflictions of Job,  
and how that before the Lord turned away  
his captivity, he was bereft of all his pro-  
perty, and appeared destitute of every pos-  
sible mean of recovering it. Yet was this  
man more wealthy at the end of his life  
than at the beginning, and died full of days

SERM. and honour. Nor was he of the stock of  
 XIV. Israel; but his history seems to have been  
 recorded and preserved to inform us, how  
 those who had no other source of instruction than the traditions derived from Noah, and their own observation, were wont to argue on the government of God, and the events that took place among men. Nor are the sinking to a low estate, and afterwards being exalted higher than before, circumstances in their kind peculiar to Job, but such as are frequently exemplified on the extensive theatre of the world, and mark the operation of His hand, “who (in the language of the psalmist) raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth the needy out of the dunghill; that he may set him with princes, even with the princes of his people.”

And while the instances recorded in Scripture thus encourage every individual to rely as to his own case, on the never-failing providence of God, we are taught, by the most direct lessons of the same holy writings, to consider it as our duty to do so,

“Commit

“Commit thy way unto the Lord; **SERM.**  
(saith the psalmist) trust also in Him, and **XIV.**  
He shall bring it to pass. Rest in the Lord,   
and wait patiently for Him.” (Psal. xxvii.  
5—7.) And One greater than David:  
“Which of you, by taking thought, can  
add one cubit unto his stature? And why  
take ye thought for raiment? Consider the  
lilies of the field, how they grow: they  
toil not, neither do they spin: And yet I  
I say unto you, that even Solomon, in all  
his glory, was not arrayed like one of these.  
Wherefore, if God so clothe the grafs of the  
field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is  
cast into the oven, shall He not much more  
clothe you, O ye of little faith. Therefore  
take no thought, saying, What shall we  
eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Where-  
withal shall we be clothed? (for after all  
these things do the Gentiles seek) for your  
heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need  
of all these things. But seek ye first the  
kingdom of God and his righteoufness, and  
all these things shall be added unto you.”  
Whence His apostle’s charge to the Philip-  
pians:



SERMON. pians: "Be careful for nothing; but in  
XIV. every thing, by prayer and supplication,  
with thanksgiving, let your requests be  
made known unto God." And that too of  
St. Peter; "casting all your care upon  
Him, for He careth for you."

The confidence which by these lessons we are taught to have in the providence of our heavenly Father, extends, you see, to all points: "in every thing let your request be made known"—"Casting all your care on Him." Various are the evils with which men are threatened, different are the dangers in which they stand; some are apprehensive of want; others are fearful of ill treatment; some dread the loss of friends; and others the effect of malicious tongues. Under all these we are encouraged to look up to Him, Who knowing what would be our situation long before, has secured an event suited to our conduct, and with the danger has already made for them, who surely trust in Him, a way likewise to escape. What, then, prevents Christians  
from

from using this source of consolation, this **SERM.**  
mode of securing to themselves deliverance? **XIV.**

Is it want of reflection on the power, or   
ignorance of the promises of God? Or does  
it arise from the influence of the cavils  
started by the unbelieving and the profane?  
Or proceeds it from a fear of their own  
unworthiness? Or, lastly, is it occasioned  
by a conjunction of some, or of all these  
causes? The first of these causes can hardly  
operate in your breasts, after what has been  
stated to you in this and other discourses.  
As for the second, the vanity of our enemies'  
reasonings are obviated by all the miraculous  
facts wrought in support of the law and  
the Gospel, since these demonstrate the truth  
of that doctrine which commands us to  
pray, and faint not; to trust in the Lord,  
and fear not. And for our own unworthi-  
ness, did not He who gave the lesson, know  
to what frail beings He was giving it? Or  
were our deserving them made the condition  
of the divine gifts to us, which should we  
retain? Surely, if on this condition alone  
we hold them, those which make us capable  
of

**SERM.** of the others would be withdrawn. Yet,  
**XIV.** is not the life more than food, and the body  
than raiment? As long, therefore, as God  
vouchsafes us these greater gifts, may we  
not well trust in Him for the rest?

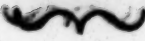
If, indeed, we ask with an evil heart; if we desire plenty only to consume it on our lusts; or if, being entrusted with it, we shall certainly do so, though by no means purposing at present so to do, it certainly will not be granted; and manifest it is, that it will be much better for ourselves that it should, in these cases, be refused. But if, with penitent hearts, we apply to Heaven for relief, if we sincerely amend our conduct, and cry to God for mercy, we entitle ourselves to the benefit of His promises to the returning sinner; and His unspeakable and unsearchable mercy hath, in this case, provided a remedy for our past evil deserts, by imputing to us faith for righteousness; and the loss of innocence, in itself naturally irrecoverable, is repaired by the christian's  
being



being allowed to plead the merits of the **SERM.**  
Son of God in his own behalf. **XIV.**

Here, then, we are provided with a remedy, when assaulted by impatience under sufferings, by the dread of distress, or by anxiety for the morrow. These belong not to the disciples of Christ, who have the sure pledge of their Master's word, that if they first strive to perform the task He hath given them, their heavenly Father will never forsake them. And, in truth, though so small be the degree of earnestness with which most of us seek the kingdom of God and his righteousness, as by no means to entitle us to having all these things added unto us, yet few there are, I will venture to say, among us, who, if they carefully review the various incidents of their lives, will not find some circumstances in which they must acknowledge, that their safety or relief was manifestly owing to the kind providence of God: and many, I am confident, will, with grateful hearts, recollect unexpected occurrences, by which they have  
been

SERM. been timely saved from afflictions, that  
XIV. would have stung them to the soul.



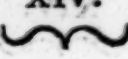
Neither is it merely to past deliverances of individuals that we may look for assurance in the providence of God, since not only the more publick proofs of the divine interposition, and the greater acts of His moral government of the earth, but the material world, and the regular course of wonders He has therein established, yield, if duely considered, sound arguments for the firmest reliance on His ready help. When almost tempted to despondency, by the greatness of his sufferings, the psalmist took this way of re-animating himself. "I will remember," saith he, "the works of the Lord: surely, I will remember thy wonders of old. Thou art the God that doest wonders. Thou hast declared thy strength among the people. Thou hast, with thine arm, redeemed thy people, the sons of Jacob and Joseph." The power and goodness manifested by these deliverances, reminded him, that there was one able and merciful

merciful to deliver from difficulties as great **SERM.**  
as those under which his self was suffering; **XIV.**  
nor did their having been wrought for a  
whole nation appear to him an objection to  
reasoning from them to his own case: in  
the rescue of the people, the prayers of in-  
dividuals were answered, the calamity that  
menaced individuals was averted. Neither  
can the divine Providence be well placed in  
a stronger light than it is by the prophetick  
dispensation: by that, events are foreshewn  
which require a long action of overruling  
power to bring them to pass; and, through  
opposition of every kind, are means pre-  
pared for verifying declarations uttered  
thousands of years before the time intended  
for their accomplishment. Yet, by this  
extensive system, it is the happiness of in-  
dividuals that is sought, the salvation of  
every particular person, that shall be found  
worthy of admission into that kingdom,  
which has been so long announced. The  
existence, and circumvolutions of the hea-  
venly bodies, the uninterrupted vicissitude  
of the seasons, the suitableness of the pro-  
ductions



SERM. ductions of the earth to the support and  
XIV. comfort of its inhabitants; all indicate a  
providential care of that race which has the  
greatest share in these blessings. But were  
we to presume, that this care extends no  
farther than to our outward accommodation,  
the system would appear as a fine fruit, de-  
fective at the heart, or as a watch-case  
richly decorated, but unprovided with the  
still more important work of the movements  
within: and therefore we cannot give glory  
to God, we cannot think worthily of Him;  
unless embracing the whole doctrine of  
Scripture, we believe His Providence to be  
perfect: and that the high and holy One  
which inhabiteth eternity, not only hum-  
bleth Himself to behold the things which  
are done in heaven and earth, but dwelleth  
also with him that is of an humble and  
contrite spirit.

Here behold then, what they lose, who,  
disobeying the injunction of our Lord to  
seek first the kingdom of God and His  
righteousness, deprive themselves of the  
claim

claim He has allowed to the having *all these* SERM.  
*things* added unto them ! Behold, too, what XIV.  
 consolation, what support under difficulties,   
 they put from them, who, refusing to trust  
 the divine goodness for the supply of the  
 morrow, with anxious hearts hoard what  
 they have, or labour, with solicitude, to en-  
 crease their store ! And, after ye have con-  
 sidered the loss such men thus suffer in the  
 present state, reflect further, how little it  
 is to be compared to the contempt to which  
*they* must awake in the next, who have pre-  
 ferred the good things of the earth to the  
 honours and the happiness of that ; who,  
 after experiencing every day the divine  
 mercy, in continuing to them the gift of  
 life, were yet afraid to trust in God for  
 those things which are necessary to preserve  
 that life from becoming in itself a curse.  
 And let these reflections produce in you  
 another mind, that so far from being tempted  
 by fear of want to trespass on, or covet the  
 property of others, ye may not even be un-  
 easy as to the success of your honest endea-  
 vours to obtain support, but trusting in  
 Him,

**SERM.** Him, who is the Saviour of all men, and  
**XIV.** especially of those that believe, argue from  
the power of Him on whose protection ye  
rely to your own security: "Truely my  
soul waiteth upon God: from Him cometh  
my salvation: He only is my rock and my  
salvation: He is my defence: I shall not be  
greatly moved: The Lord is my helper,  
and I will not fear what man shall do unto  
me." And from past instances of His mercy  
to His future kindness: "He that spared  
not His own Son, but delivered Him up for  
us all, How shall He not with Him also  
freely give us all things?" And, lastly,  
conclude consistently with these promises,  
to obey the injunctions of your Redeemer,  
and "take therefore no thought for the  
morrow: for the morrow shall take thought  
for the things of itself. Sufficient for the  
day is the evil thereof."

SER-



## SERMON XV.

ON THE SON OF GOD.

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HEB. I. 1, 2, 3, 4.

*God, who at sundry times, and in divers manners, spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath, in these last days, spoken unto us by His Son, whom He hath appointed Heir of all things, by Whom also He made the worlds ; Who being the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high ; being made so much better than the angels, as He hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.*

**W**HEN our blessed Lord had, at a SERM.  
word, calmed the tempestuous waves, <sup>XV.</sup>  
those who were present at the miracle natu-  
rally

SERM. rally asked, "What manner of man is this,  
 XV. that even the wind and the sea obey him?"  
 And as naturally might we when reading,  
 that "He is our advocate with the Father,  
 and the propitiation for the sins of the  
 whole world, exclaim, "What manner of  
 person can this be, that He should even in-  
 tercede between God and His creatures, and  
 have merit enough to become an acceptable  
 sacrifice for others, and to procure salvation  
 for the world?" The text, with other parts  
 of holy writ, solve this question; and, by  
 revealing to us the natural dignity of the  
 Saviour, justify us in believing, that He is  
 able to save, to the uttermost, all that come  
 unto Him: and, at the same time, suggest  
 to us the weight of the obligation we lie  
 under not to neglect so great a salvation;  
 since, if "he that despised Moses' law,  
 died without mercy, of how much sorer  
 punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought  
 worthy, who hath trodden under foot the  
 Son of God?"

Manifest

I Manifest it is, that those who are induced SERM.  
by their prejudices, pride or passions, to re- XV.  
ceive only those parts of revelation which  
do not contradict their preconceptions, or  
oppose their inclinations, by rejecting this  
doctrine of the divinity of Christ, detract  
much from the weight of obligation on  
themselves to adhere under every difficulty,  
and spite of every temptation to His words:  
and, conscious of this, (as the children of  
this world are wiser in their generation than  
the children of light) those enemies of all  
righteousness, who, in a neighbouring coun-  
try, laboured at a plan to destroy christianity  
from among men, in their instructions to  
their emissaries, speak of those who deny  
the divine nature in the Saviour, as little  
else than friends to their plot: giving herein  
a fearful admonition against this departure  
from the faith once delivered to the saints,  
by their considering it to be a sure step to-  
wards compleat apostacy from the Gospel.  
After such a warning, then, from the enemy  
himself, is it not peculiarly incumbent on us  
to recollect the lessons of Scripture on this

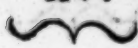


**SERM.** important doctrine, and to enquire (as I  
**XV.** purpose now to do before you) into what  
 the Scriptures teach concerning the divine  
 nature of the second of those persons in  
 whose names we are baptized.

Here, however, do not fear that I am  
 going to lead you into any abstruse specula-  
 tions, more calculated to amuse the thoughts  
 than inform the mind; however exalted be  
 the natural dignity of our Redeemer, that  
 Holy Spirit, which searcheth the deep things  
 of God, has so expressed as much of it as  
 it is necessary for us to know, that no man  
 of fair mind can doubt of the infinite worth  
 of the atonement offered for his sins, nor  
 the perfection of the Mediatour, who liveth  
 for ever, to make intercession for him.

In that most interesting conversation,  
 which our Lord held with His disciples the  
 night before His crucifixion, on His saying,  
 "I came forth from the Father, and am  
 come into the world. Again; I leave the  
 world, and go to the Father;" they an-  
 swered,

swered, "Lo, now speakest Thou plainly, SERM.  
and speakest no proverb:" a reply which XV.  
sufficiently proves, that they understood their  
Master's words in the most literal sense :  
and what would a plain man conclude from  
them thus understood, but that He existed  
as really with the Father, before He came  
into the world, as He would do after He  
had left it ? He had taught the same thing,  
indeed, when He said, " I am the living  
bread which came down from Heaven ;"  
but the similitude then used might prevent  
His words from being at that time confi-  
dered as decisive ; they contained, in the  
language of the apostles, " a proverb."  
But whatever obscurity attended them, or  
any others, of which He had made use on  
the same subject, it was cleared away by  
these direct terms in which He spake when  
about to leave the world ; and accordingly  
we find, in the writings of apostles, the  
most explicit assertions of the same fact.  
Thus St. John, in the fourth chapter of his  
first epistle: " We have seen, and do testify,  
that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour

SERM. of the world. Whosoever shall confess that  
XV.  Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God :” and, at the commencement of the same epistle, “ That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled of the word of life ; (for the life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us).” And St. Paul, in like manner, writing to the Philippians : “ Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus : Who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but made himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men.” (Phil. ii. 6, 7.)

But there is, ye may observe in this last passage, not only a declaration, that the Redeemer of mankind existed before His appearance on earth, but that He existed as  
God,



God, as truly as He afterwards was found SERM.  
in fashion as a man; “ Who being in the XV.  
form of God—took upon Him the form of  
a servant, and was made in the likeness of  
man.” The same truth, too, is amply  
taught by the beloved disciple, in the be-  
ginning of his Gospel: “ In the beginning  
was the word, and the word was with God,  
and the word was God: the same was in  
the beginning with God.” And, in the  
fourteenth verse of the same chapter: “ And  
the word was made flesh, and dwelt among  
us, (and we beheld His glory, the glory as  
of the only-begotten of the Father) full of  
grace and truth.”

Plain, however, as these passages are, and  
cogent as are a multitude of others, to the  
establishment of the same doctrine, it was  
not to be dissembled, that there have been,  
and yet are, who, though pretending to re-  
ceive the Scriptures as the revelation of  
God, deny that the divinity of the Saviour is  
herein taught. To expose the awkward eva-  
sions, and refute at large the presumptuous  
sophistry

SERM. sophistry of these corrupters of the Gospel,  
 XV. would be taking up your time unnecessarily ;  
 since, on all questions of this kind, we must  
 finally be determined by the words of revelation, and these we can investigate without attending to the endless observations of disputative men.

Is the doctrine, then, which seems to be so expressly taught by St. John and St. Paul, inconsistent with any other parts of holy writ, so that, to preserve the mutual agreements of its several portions, it is absolutely necessary to discover (if such could be discovered) some other meaning of their words? True it is, that it is written in the law, "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord." (Deut. vi. 4.) And by St. Paul : "To us there is one God the Father, of whom are all things, and we in Him, and one Lord Jesus Christ, by Whom are all things, and we by Him." (1 Cor. viii. 6.) And, agreeably to these passages, the unity of God is constantly inculcated throughout the sacred writings ; so that unless the Son  
 is

is one with the Father in so strict a sense as SERM.  
not to derogate from this unity of the God- XV.  
head, these last texts will be at variance  
with those I have before quoted. But that  
there existeth in them an unity to which  
we should in vain look for a parallel in the  
creation, and that in this, as well as in other  
respects, for the Deity there can found no  
manner of similitude, we are taught, by the  
words of Christ Himself, who said to the  
Jews, "I and my Father are one," (John x.  
30.) And when they accused Him of  
making Himself God by this declaration,  
He interpreted it as no more than equivalent  
to saying, that He was the Son of God.  
On another occasion He declared, "No  
one knoweth the Son but the Father: nei-  
ther knoweth any one the Father save the  
Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will  
reveal Him." (Matt. xi. 27.) And again:  
"As the Father knoweth me, so know  
I the Father." (John x. 15.) When ac-  
cused of making Himself equal with God,  
because He said, "My Father worketh  
hitherto, and I work;" He did not deny  
the



**SERM.** the charge, but replied, <sup>his</sup> Verily, Verily,  
**XV.** I say unto you, the Son can do nothing of  
 Himself, but what He seeth the Father do:  
 for what things soever He doeth, these  
 doeth the Son likewise." (John v. 19.)  
 And in His discourse at the last supper, is  
 the following most remarkable passage,  
 which ought to be constantly retained in the  
 mind of every christian, who would think  
 justly of His Saviour: "If ye had known  
 me, ye should have known my Father also:  
 and from henceforth ye know Him, and  
 have seen Him. Philip saith unto Him,  
 Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth  
 us. Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so  
 long with you, and yet hast thou not known  
 me, Philip? He that hath seen me, hath  
 seen the Father; and how sayest thou, Shew  
 us the Father. Believest thou not that I  
 am in the Father, and the Father in me?  
 The words that I speak unto you, I speak  
 not of myself; but the Father that dwelleth  
 in me, He doeth the works. Believe me,  
 that I am in the Father, and the Father in  
 me: or else believe me, for the very work's  
 sake.

fake. Verily, Verily, I say unto you, he SERM.  
that believeth on me, the works that I do, XV.  
shall he do also: and greater works than  
these shall he do; because I go unto my  
Father. And whatsoever ye shall ask in  
my name, that will I do, that the Father  
may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall  
ask any thing in my name, I will do it.”  
(John xiv. 7—14.) When, too, Judas (not  
Iscaiot) said unto Him, “ Lord, How is  
it that Thou wilt manifest Thyself unto us,  
and not unto the world? Jesus answered,  
If a man love me, he will keep my words:  
and my Father will love him, and *we* will  
come unto him, and make our abode with  
him.”

Now the positive declaration made in the  
first of these passages, and the very peculiar  
characteristicks described in the others,  
evinced an unity which we cannot perfectly  
conceive, much less find words to express;  
and yet, if we look back into the Old  
Testament, we shall perceive, that it is only  
by this doctrine of the subsistence of more  
than

SERM. than one person in the unity of the God-  
 xv. head, that several passages and facts *there*  
 recorded can be explained. In the account  
 of the creation, we read, "And God said,  
 Let us make man in our image, after our  
 likeness." Some Jewish interpreters, not  
 being able otherwise to account for the use  
 of the terms us, and our in this passage,  
 with satisfaction to themselves, supposed  
 that they were spoken to the angels of the  
 Lord, an imagination directly contrary to  
 the words of God by His prophet. "I  
 am the Lord, that maketh all things, that  
 stretcheth forth the heavens alone, and  
 spreadeth abroad the earth by myself."  
 (Is. xlv. 24.) "Who hath directed the  
 Spirit of the Lord, or, being His counsel-  
 lor, hath taught Him? with whom took  
 He counsel?" (Is. xl. 13, 14.) And no less  
 inconsistent with these declarations is the  
 fancy of more modern interpreters, who  
 have conceived, that Moses hath here re-  
 presented God as speaking in a manner long  
 since adopted by earthly monarchs, but of  
 which style there is not to be found,  
 3 throughout



throughout the Old Testament, a single real instance : while, moreover, as he is recording a fact, strange indeed must be that man's idea of an inspired writer, who can presume, that where so material principle as the nature of the Deity is concerned, he would merely copy terms that might tend to mislead, and write, that God said, " Let us make man," when God had not said so.

SERM.  
XV.  
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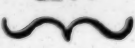
These evasions, rather than interpretations, refuted, the passage itself remains inexplicable ; but by what has since been more fully revealed unto us, that the word was in the beginning with God, and was God, and that without Him was not any thing made that was made ; and that the Spirit, which proceedeth from the Father, knoweth the things of God, even as the spirit of a man knoweth the things of a man. But holding, as it appears from their remaining works, that the primitive christians did, that it was this Word with this Spirit that was thus addressed, those similar passages, " the man is become as one of us,"
(Gen.

SERM. (Gen. iii. 22.) and, “Go to, let us go
XV. down, and there confound their language,”
have also their meaning explained. By the same means will be solved the difficulty which arises from the apparent disagreement between those passages of Scripture, which declare that no man hath seen God at any time, and the others, which assert, that the Lord appeared unto the patriarchs and others. “No man (saith St. John) hath seen God at any time.” (John i. 18.) “Ye have neither (saith our Lord, speaking of the Father) heard His voice at any time, nor seen His shape.” (John v. 37.) Yet various are the passages of the Old Testament, which affirm, that God appeared, and spoke unto different persons; to Adam, to Noah, to Abraham, to Jacob, to Moses, and to the elders of Israel. Since then the Scripture cannot be broken, Who was it that thus vouchsafed to converse, from the first, with the sons of men, since it was not the Father? Hear the beloved disciple to this question: “The only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath

hath declared Him." Hear, too, that Son SERM.
Himself. "Not that any man hath seen XV.
the Father, save He which is of God, He
hath seen the Father." (John vi. 46.) And
hence probably it is that St. Paul, in his
epistle to the Colossians, calls Christ the
image of the invisible God. But farther;
if there can be such a thing as positive de-
claration, it was positively declared by the
prophet Isaiah, that the Lord God should
come to Jerusalem, and visit His people,
and perform among them such miraculous
works as would manifest His presence.
"O, Zion, that bringest good tidings, get
thee up into the high mountain: O, Jeru-
salem, that bringest good tidings, lift up
thy voice with strength; lift it up, be not
afraid. Say unto the cities of Judah, Be-
hold your God! Behold the Lord God will
come with strong hand, and His arm shall
rule for Him: Behold, His reward is with
Him, and His work before Him. He shall
feed His flock like a shepherd; He shall
gather the lambs with His arm, and carry
them in His bosom, and shall gently lead
those

SERM. those that are with young." (Is. xl. 9, 10, 11.)

XV. And in the third verse of the same chapter :
" The voice of Him that crieth, In the wilderness prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low : and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain : and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together ; for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it." And in the thirty-fifth of the same prophet : " Strengthen ye the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees. Say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, Fear not : Behold your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompence, He will come, and save you. Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb shall sing." These passages speak positively, I say, of what we may not improperly term a personal appearance of God ; yet are they
applied

applied in the New Testament to that of SERM.
our blessed Saviour: and, indeed, in no XV.
other way have they, (perhaps I might say) 
can they be fulfilled. He declared Himself
to be the good Shepherd; He pointed Him-
self out as He at whose coming the blind
received their sight, the lame walked, the
deaf heard: and, in addition to these tokens,
said, "Blessed is he, whosoever shall not
be offended in me," when it had been by
the prophet proclaimed, that "the Lord
of Hosts Himself should be for a stone of
stumbling, and for a rock of offence to both
the houses of Israel." (Is. viii. 13, 14.)
Nay, when asked by the Jews, "Thou art
not yet fifty years old, and hast Thou seen
Abraham?" did He not reply, in a stile
which was, at the call of Moses, peculiarly
consecrated to the divine use, "Verily,
Verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham
was I am." (John viii. 58.) Which, it
should be remembered, the Jews so plainly
understood to be a claim to divinity, that
they would have stoned Him, had He not
miraculously concealed Himself from them.

SERM. And now, to strengthen and complete
XV. this deduction on the natural dignity of our Redeemer, let us consider, what His apostles, after they had received that Spirit which was sent expressly to lead them into all the truth, taught concerning the person of their Master; and see whether they, in fact, reasoned from the ancient Scriptures to His pre-existence as God, at all in the manner that has been followed in this discourse? After the words I have before quoted from the beginning of St. John's Gospel, in which that great apostle asserts the divinity of the word, he proceeds to declare His presence at the creation, and His actual operation in it. "All things were made by Him; and without Him was not any thing made that was made." In the text, we are expressly informed, that the Son, by whom God hath, in these last days, spoken unto us, is He "by whom also He made the worlds: the brightness of His glory, the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power." And, in the first epistle

epistle to Timothy, we read, “ And with- SERM.
out controversy, great is the mystery of XV.
godliness: God was manifest in the flesh,
justified in the spirit, seen of angels,
preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in
the world, received up into glory.” (1 Tim.
iii. 16.) To Him who was thus manifest,
is applied in the chapter of the text, not
merely by accommodation, but expressly
affirmed to be addressed to Him, those words
of the psalmist, “ Thou, Lord, in the be-
ginning, hast laid the foundation of the
earth, and the Heavens are the works of
thine hands. They shall perish, but Thou
remainest: and they all shall wax old as
doth a garment; and as a vesture shalt Thou
fold them up, and they shall be changed:
but Thou art the same, and thy years shall
not fail.” (Heb. i. 10, 11, 12.) And in
his epistle to the Colossians, St. Paul de-
clares, that “ in Him dwelleth all the ful-
ness of the Godhead bodily.” (Col. ii. 9.)
So that without adding several other texts
that might be produced to the same purpose,
here is sufficient apostolick authority to
v 3 justify

SERM. justify the application of those passages of
XV. the Old Testament to our blessed Saviour,
which stand in need of such an application to remove their inconsistency with any other parts of Scripture, however strongly they express the divine nature or attributes, and consequently the guidance of the Holy Spirit to the acknowledgment of the truth, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself.

Having thus ascertained, from the infallible oracle of the word of God, the pre-existence and divine nature of Him who took flesh to redeem us, does it not now become us to ask ourselves, "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?" A salvation, into the depth of the mercy of which even angels desire to look? And shall we not neglect it, if we either overlook the greatness of the sacrifice offered for us, not "corruptible things, as silver and gold, but the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish, and without spot?" or lightly esteem the purpose for which such a sacrifice

sacrifice was made, “to redeem us from all iniquity, and obtain for us an everlasting inheritance in the kingdom of God?”

SERM.
XV.

These are points to which our attention is particularly called in the epistle to the Hebrews, the authour of that calling on us to consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession Jesus Christ, who was counted worthy of more glory than Moses, inasmuch as he who hath builded the house, hath more honour than the house; and declaring, that “it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and the powers of the world to come, if they fall away, to renew them again unto repentance.” If, with these exhortations, we compare the very inadequate estimation in which many, who are yet sincere in their belief of the Gospel, hold the wonderful things done for them in the work of human redemption, we must acknowledge that they neglect this great salvation, even if it be only by not giving it that attentive consideration which it so justly demands. If there are, who doubt

SERM. the power of Christ, to save to the utter-
XV. most all those who come unto God by Him,
or who deem the conditions of life which
He has set before us, inefficient or unnecessary; these, of course, must neglect the
salvation which began to be spoken by the
Lord. And since He has declared, that
“He that taketh not up his cross, and followeth after Him, is not worthy of Him,”
What must remain for those who will not
take the trouble to enquire into the importance of His words, or the full meaning,
obligation and tendency of His commandments? Had we not the experience of
every day in testimony of the fact, incredible would it appear, that men could trifle, as
they do, with the offer of everlasting life,
or deem the prospect of perfect and interminable happiness in a future state unworthy of earnest attention. Anxious as
they generally appear to preserve themselves from distress of every kind, scarcely would
it be believed, that they would carelessly
risque the accumulated misery of the loss
of felicity unspeakable, and of the suffering
all

all the punishments that must flow from SERM.
the curse of a justly offended Deity. Is it XV.
that in other cases great advantages are
usually obtained without great exertions?
or imminent evils avoided by carelessness?
Or, is it that in this case in particular men
are not required to be earnest in their efforts
for victory? The contrary of all this ye
must be sensible is truth. Success is the
natural reward of labour and vigilance:
miscarriage and distress as naturally follow
idleness and carelessness; and the Gospel
calls on us to work out our salvation with
fear and trembling; and promises, that we
shall reap on no other condition than that
we faint not. Let us, therefore, remem-
bering the very great difference of character
there does, according to the same Gospel,
exist between the disciples of Christ and
the children of the world, endeavour to
adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in
all things, and prove, that we are not in-
sensible of the love which the Father hath
bestowed on us, in sending His only-be-
gotten Son, that we might live by Him,

SERM. nor of what the Son hath done in dying for
XV. us, while we were yet sinners, by continuing faithful in His words until He shall return from where He now sitteth, on the right hand of the Majesty on high, to overwhelm with destruction all those who will not that He shall reign over them, and to gather His saints into that kingdom, where they shall reign with Him for ever and ever.

SERMON XVI.

ON THE HOLY SPIRIT.

I COR. XII. 4, 5, 6.

Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit: and there are diversities of administrations, but the same Lord: and there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all.

THE doctrines which more peculiarly SERM.
distinguish christianity from every other XVI.
system of religion, are the incarnation of
the Son of God, that He might make expiation for our sins, and the existence of three persons in the divine nature. The revelation of the last of these, indeed, seems to be only a more perfect discovery of what the ancient Jews, as well as other nations, had

SERM. had learned by tradition from the earliest
XVI. generations of mankind. But both of them
being far beyond the reach of human investigation, and yielding, too, particular inferences to the absolute necessity of holiness of life, they have met with numerous opponents, who have assaulted them with all the obstinacy with which men will naturally contend for the hopes of life, or against the fear of condemnation. That particular portion of these which the passage of Scripture I have now read to you suggests to our consideration, is the existence of the Holy Ghost as a person distinct from the Father and the Son, which some of our gainsayers have denied, under an imagination, that the texts which teach it may be explained, by saying, that they relate only to an influence, or a disposition ; as when we say, a man's pride taught him so to behave ; or, " they were led by a spirit of opposition to do such an act." To confirm you in the conviction that these are but the misinterpretations of misguided men, I shall, in this discourse, state to you some of those declarations of Scripture

Scripture

Scripture which teach us, that the Holy SERM.
Spirit is a divine person, before I proceed XVI.
to speak of what is revealed concerning
His operation on the minds of the christians,
and the absolute necessity in which we stand
of His assistance to forward and complete
the work of our salvation.

When our blessed Lord was about to ascend where He was before, He said unto His apostles, “ I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you for ever ; the Spirit of Truth.” And a little after, “ But the Comforter, the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.” And yet again, in the same discourse, “ Howbeit, when He, the Spirit of Truth, is come, He will guide you into all the truth : for He shall not speak of Himself ; but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak : and He will shew you things to come. He shall glorify me :

SERM. me: for He shall receive of mine, and shall

XVI. shew it unto you." (John xiv. 15, 16—26.

and xvi. 13, 14.) Now if ye recall to mind the terms in which our Saviour before spake of Himself, ye will see, that they are nearly the same which He here employs in speaking of the Holy Ghost. Of Himself He said, " For I have not spoken of myself, but the Father which sent me: He gave me a commandment what I should say, and what I should speak; whatsoever I speak, therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak." (John xii. 49, 50.) Of the Spirit He said, " For He shall not speak of Himself, but whatsoever He shall hear that shall He speak." Can we then doubt that, as He spake of a person in the first of these passages, He did so in the last? The same acts of hearing and speaking are ascribed to both; and since there clearly is no figurative personification in the first, Why are we to suppose it in the other? The same questions might be repeated with regard to the passage of text, wherein diversities of gifts are ascribed to the.

the Spirit in the same manner as diversities SERM.
of administrations to the Lord: nay, a few XVI.
verses onward, the apostle, after enumerating
various gifts, writes, "But all these work-
eth that one and the self same Spirit, di-
viding to every man severally as He will."
(1 Cor. xii. 11.) Thus ascribing to the
Spirit that which belongs specifically to a
personal and intelligent being, Freewill.

To the same purpose might it be urged,
that in the commission given the disciples
to preach the Gospel to all nations, they
were commanded to baptize them in the
name of the Father, and of the Son, and of
the Holy Ghost, without any mark of dis-
tinction whatever, either as to the service to
be rendered, or as to the nature of those
whose names are thus called over us. For
is it to be imagined, that in forming a so-
lemn covenant with the human race, the
Father and the Son would order to be joined
with their own names that of a mere faculty;
or, indeed, that of any other than a person
who was not equal to take part with them, in
giving

SERM. giving salvation to all the sons of Adam,
XVI. who would be converted and live?

But as it was not with a view to raise your indignation against the perverseness of men, on whom such clear manifestations of the truth are lost, but to awaken your caution, and arm your minds against their errors and misrepresentations, that this disquisition was entered into, I shall only add to these proofs of the personality of the Holy Ghost, that it is written, that He spake, as unto Philip the deacon, so unto Peter, while he was thinking on the vision he had been shewn from Heaven, and said unto him, " Behold three men seek thee. Arise, therefore, and get thee down, and go with them, doubting nothing : for I have sent them." (Acts x. 21, 22.) And again, to the teachers of the church of Antioch, to whom, as they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, says the sacred historian, " the Holy Ghost said, " Separate me, Barnabas and Saul, for the work whereunto I have called them." (Acts xiii. 2.) And that, at
the

the baptism of the Lord Jesus Christ, " He SERM.
descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon XVI.
him." (St. Luke iii. 22.)

Having thus stated to you, that from the scriptural accounts of His office, His acts, and His appearance, it is evident, that the Holy Spirit is really a divine Person. Let us now turn our enquiry to those operations on the human mind, which the sacred writings ascribe to Him. These are two-fold, ordinary and extraordinary ; from the first arise, in general, every good inclination, every real virtue and amiable quality ; and, in particular, the love of truth and faith in God and Christ, with all the graces which are consequent on it : and, from the second, those miraculous powers with which the ancient prophets and first preachers of the Gospel were endowed, as tongues, prophecy, and the discerning of spirits.

If ye would now ask, How dispositions and powers so different from what we naturally possess, are produced in our minds ?

SERM. We can answer only in the words of our
XVI.  Master, "The wind bloweth where it
listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof,
but canst not tell whence it cometh, and
whither it goeth: so is every one that is
born of the Spirit." Ye see, indeed, the
effects of this Holy Spirit's inspiration in
the virtues or powers of those with whom
He vouchsafes to dwell; but how these
powers or virtues arise, or how far they
will extend, not even those who possess
them can tell. A remarkable proof of this
we have, as to the miraculous gifts of the
Holy Ghost, in the fact of the prophets not
always knowing the full extent of the pre-
dictions uttered by themselves. From
various passages of their writings, it should
seem, that the apostles thought that the end
of all things was much nearer at hand in
their age, than it has in the event proved to
be, though they spake of the previous cir-
cumstances that must necessarily come to
pass. And may we not conclude, that
somewhat similar took place with respect
to the ancient prophets, from the following
words

words of St. Peter : “ Of which salvation SERM.
the prophets have enquired and searched XVI.
diligently, who prophesied of the grace that
should come unto you : searching what or
what manner of time the Spirit of Christ,
which was in them, did signify, when it
testified before-hand the sufferings of Christ,
and the glory that should follow. Unto
whom it was revealed, that not unto them-
selves, but unto us, they did minister the
things which are now reported unto you by
them that have preached the Gospel unto
you, with the Holy Ghost sent down from
Heaven ; which things the angels desire to
look into.” (1 Pet. i. 10, 11, 12.) And
as to the more common influences of this
divine Spirit, if the mode of their operation
was discoverable by us, every real christian
could trace, better than some weak enthu-
siasts now pretend to do, the descent of the
Holy Ghost into his mind, and all his mo-
tions therein, and the question I have sup-
posed would be needless. As it is, that
new birth on which all our hopes of an
heavenly inheritance depend, is carried on

SERM. imperceptibly to ourselves, except in the
XVI. consequent alteration in our views and inclinations, and habits ; when the produce of our natural birth, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, with all our anxious thoughts and premeditated plans for securing ourselves easy and pleasurable situations to the end of our days here, are changed for the true love of God, and earnest exertions to obtain, before all things, His kingdom and His righteousness.

That such a purification of our minds, and amendment of our dispositions, is absolutely requisite for our admission into the kingdom of Heaven, we may not only presume, from considering both how incapable of pure happiness in himself, and how unlikely to refrain from disturbing that of others, would be a man with all, or any of his evil affections, and uncorrected habits about him, but surely conclude, from the positive declaration of our Lord made to Nicodemus, “ Verily, Verily, I say unto thee,

thee, Except a man be born of Water, and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." That likewise the divine assistance thus mentioned is absolutely necessary to the cleansing of our hearts, and the improvement of our inclinations, is manifest from its being the corruption of nature, which we have derived from the fall of our first parents, that renders us thus prone to evil: For who can restore the nature of man once depraved by the entrance of sin, to its original state of purity and righteousness, but He who at first made him upright? The necessity of such a regeneration to the happiness of man, has been by many, in various regions, and different ages, seen and acknowledged; but human means alone being inadequate to the work, the employment of them has often either degenerated into base hypocrisy, or produced a spiritual pride by no means consistent with real righteousness; and it remained for the Saviour of the world to procure this gift for the race, whose redemption He vouchsafed to undertake.

SERM.
XVI.

SERM. When, therefore, His disciples went forth
 XVI. to preach among the nations, repentance
 towards God, and faith towards our Lord
 Jesus Christ, He not only wrought with
 them, by confirming their word with signs
 and wonders, but through the operation of
 the Holy Ghost, the hearts of their hearers
 were opened to receive their lessons, and re-
 pentance unto life was given to the nations.

“ Having then begun in the Spirit, Can
 we be made perfect by the flesh ? ” Can we,
 with the natural powers of our souls, pro-
 ceed (as we are, in our baptismal office,
 told we are engaged to do) in all virtue and
 godliness of living ? If there be any suffi-
 ciently conceited of themselves to imagine
 they can, these plainly are deficient in one
 Gospel virtue than which there is not any
 more becoming, or more necessary to the
 well-being of such a creature as man, I
 mean lowliness of mind, one of the gifts
 of that Spirit whose assistance they are mad
 enough to reject : and, by that deficiency,
 thus prove the very truth they presume to
 controvert,

controvert, "that of ourselves we can effectually do nothing." The weakness of our nature is sufficiently expressed by the acknowledgment and plea so often heard from the mouth of those who have done wrong: "I confess it was not right, but I could not help it at the time." For though, had the persons who thus own themselves to have done evil, earnestly fought, and honestly made use of the divine assistance, they would have conquered in the trials under which they fell; yet, without that assistance, "the evil which they would not, that they did," and they will continue "to do what they allow not," until they obtain, by humble and sincere petition, through Jesus Christ our Lord, that Holy Spirit, Who alone can effectually work in us both to will and to do.

SERM.

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This is a point that both merits and calls for our most serious and devout attention, since, as long as we can gain power to do the will of God, it is our own fault if we do it not, though the deficiency itself proceed

SERM. ceed immediately from want of the power

XVI. which we might have had if we would.

But here is the point of self-deception ; men feel their weakness, and thence argue, that they cannot be criminal in what they do, as it proceeds from imbecility ; while, were we to call ourselves to a strict account on the measures we have pursued to procure the additional strength we want, and which is so fully promised, and of our need of which we are so repeatedly reminded in the Scriptures, we should most of us, I fear, find, that instead of soliciting the aid of Heaven for counteracting our evil inclinations, cleansing our hearts, and vanquishing the temptations which occur by the means prescribed by the word of God, we, by our sinful compliances, and wilful impurities, offend that Holy Spirit, on whose co-operation with us, all our hopes of victory depend. Merciful as is our Creatour, we are not to presume that He will always strive with the perverseness of His creatures : great as is His long-suffering, it cannot extend to aught that would serve as
encou-

encouragement to despise His authority: SERM.
nor were we without any express informa- XVI.
tion on the subject, could we suppose, that
God would dwell with the obstinately fin-
ful. When, then, by reiterated rejections
of His admonitions; when, by repeatedly
refusing to do what something within us
tells us we ought to do, we grieve this
Holy Spirit, can we be surprized that He
withdraws Himself from us, and that we
no longer feel an inward repugnance to con-
duct, under the practice of which we were
at first uneasy, and full of misgivings of
heart?

And how fearful is such a state! The
more secure we appear to ourselves to be in
it, the greater is our danger; and we see
no harm in what we do, because the true
light is taken from us.

But here, perhaps, ye would ask, "How
then can we ever be secure that we are not
in such a situation, since the ignorance of it
makes part of its danger; and unless some
criterion

SERM. criterion be named, by which a judgment
XVI. may be made, we must continue exposed
to the most tormenting uncertainty as to
our spiritual state?" This is a question
which experience proves to be of great im-
portance, since many have suffered from
despondency on the subject of it; yet by
no means from the Scriptures not containing
a sufficient rule of determination. The
faith and the works of a christian are there
laid down as proofs of our being led by the
Spirit of Christ. Thus, in the verse im-
mediately before that of the text, the apostle
says, with manifest earnestness, " Where-
fore I give you to understand, that no man
speaking by the Spirit of God, calleth Jesus
accursed: and that no man can say, that
Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost."
As far, therefore, as we are sincere in the
belief of the Gospel, so far we may justly
hope, we are led by this Holy Spirit: and,
on the other hand, as far as a man thinks
lightly of the Saviour of the world, and
despises the message sent from the Father
by Him, so far has he withdrawn himself
from

from the guidance, so far has he thrown SERM.
himself out of the protection of the Spirit XVI.
of God. Again; we read in the epistle to
the church of Galatia, " But the fruit of
the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering,
gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, tem-
perance:" and, consequently, while these
are found in our breasts, we have encou-
ragement to think, that we also have the
Spirit of Christ; but when our conduct
proves that these exist not within us, then
have we but too much reason to draw the
melancholy conclusion, " that in reality we
are none of His."

Every approach to a desertion of the
faith, every departure from those virtues
which are His gifts, must grieve that Spirit
who would, if we would but comply with
His suggestions, conduct and support us
through the work of our salvation, and,
consequently, must put us in greater danger
of finally losing His assistance. Let this
truth be duely considered, and then ye will
see the utter unreasonableness of esteeming
any

SERM. any breach of the divine law, any wilful
XVI. omission of duty as of trifling importance.

For what can escape His universal inspection? The integrity of every deed, the sincerity of every purpose, must be weighed by Him, and the deficiency of our judgment, and the slowness of our feeling with regard to them, cannot be pleaded in our excuse, because we might have obtained the assistance of a Comforter, who could lead us into all the truth, and bring to our remembrance every obligation.

Behold here, then, how great reason we have to work out our salvation with fear and trembling, since it is the God of Judgment that worketh in us both to will and to do! Behold what a call to care in the conduct of ourselves, to circumspection in guarding against impurity, since the body of every true disciple of Christ is a temple of the Holy Ghost! and what great cause not to sin against our own bodies, since he who defiles the temple of God, him will God destroy. Observe, too, how great occasion

caſion is thus given us for humility in our-
ſelves, ſince our whole ſufficiency appears
to be of God : and, at the ſame time, what
great encouragement for exerting all the
powers we have, ſince, with our heavenly
Patron, we may, if we will, be in all things
more than conquerours. What a majeſtick
idea, too, is given us of the diſpenſation,
in the bleſſings of which we are called to
partake, when we are aſſured, that the Son
of God is become our High Prieſt, and
having entered into Heaven, ſitteth at the
right hand of the Father, ever ready to
make interceſſion for us, while the Holy
Spirit dwelleth with us, to lead us into the
path of life, and raiſe us whither the Cap-
tain of our ſalvation is gone before ! And
what a pledge of future glory do they re-
ceive, with whom God thus deigneth already
to make His abode ! And ought not theſe
conſiderations to render us careful to keep
ourſelves from both the ways of the ſcoffers,
and the practices of the profane ? Of the
inevitable condemnation of thoſe who blaſ-
pheme the Holy Ghoſt, we are apprized :
and

SERM.

XVI.

SERM. and must not every approach towards a

XVI.  crime which so heavy a sentence attends, expose us to proportionate punishment? Can they who scoff at the dictates, or ridicule the suggestions of the same Spirit, hope to escape chastisement? And are not they guilty of this who treat with irreverence either the words or the doctrines of holy writ? As, on the other hand, they surely profane His holy name, who ascribe to His illumination the fancies of an overheated imagination; and while guilty of walking disorderly, of protracting schisms, and speaking evil of dignities, boldly affirm, they are guided by that wisdom which St. James describes as "first pure, then peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated, full of mercy, and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy."

SERMON XVII.

ON BAPTISM.

ST. JOHN III. 5.

Jesus answered, Verily, Verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of Water, and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

NICODEMUS, a ruler of the Jews, SERM. XVII. convinced, by the miracles of our blessed Saviour, that He was a teacher come from God, enquired of Him privately concerning His doctrine, and on that occasion was the declaration of the text delivered, in which we are explicitly informed, that no man can become a member of that kingdom, which our Lord, and His messenger John the Baptist, preached, unless through the

SERM. the baptism of Christ he be born anew.

XVII. Of this baptism the words distinguish two parts, the ritual and the spiritual; the former being that by which believers are visibly admitted into the church, and outwardly purified with water, in signification of the inward purification wrought by the latter, through the power of the Spirit of God: His promise of which to those who sincerely embraced the faith, is sealed by this sacrament being administered to them in the name of The Father, and of The Son, and of The Holy Ghost.

There could scarcely be produced a more flagrant instance of departure from that consistency of conduct, which reason and sound understanding prescribe, than is exhibited in the very different manners in which the generality of christians treat those two sacred institutions of their divine Master, Baptism and the Lord's Supper. The latter they hold in the most awful reverence; nay, often have such a dread of its sanctity, that although called thereunto, they dare not
be

be partakers of it: but the former they SERM.
frequently appear to esteem little more than XVII.
a mere ceremony, at which they attend in
a most negligent, and, I might say, inde-
cent manner, seeming totally ignorant either
for what, or before whom, they are assem-
bled! Yet was this rite appointed by the
same authority as the former; and though
we may justly, perhaps, be more stricken
with a solemnity, of the whole of which
we ourselves partake, than with one of which
another is the principal subject, yet the re-
collection of the characters in which we
appear at this last, as members of the
church; and that we were formerly dedi-
cated to the service of God and of Christ,
by the same means; and that we pretend
to continue in the faith now professed, and
have taken on ourselves the performance of
the same vows that are now made, and that
we are, at the time, expressly calling on the
Lord to ratify and perfect what we are
doing in His name, should surely induce
us to attend with seriousness, and a reverend

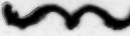
SERM. demeanour, at the admission of a fellow-
XVII. heir of the promises of God in Christ.

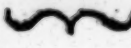
Were it only to prevent ourselves from acting unworthily of it, should we either ever be required to take the character of a sponsor for an infant on us, or if we have done so already, it would be no unprofitable employment of our time to enquire more particularly into this sacrament of baptism; but as doing so will likewise remind us of the obligations imposed on us by our own entrance into the christian covenant, a serious consideration of it may be of the most important use in rendering us more careful to perform the duties we have so solemnly contracted to discharge.

Opposite are the errors into which men have run with respect to the positive institutions of religion. Some have made all necessary practice to consist in the exact observance of these alone: such, nearly, were the Pharisees among the Jews, who
taken

taken up with the outward purifications SERM.
commanded in the law, or recommended XVII.
by their traditions, while they carefully
attended to the washing of the outside of
the cup and the platter, neglected that
purity of heart, and cleanness from the con-
tamination of iniquity, to remind them of
the necessity of preserving which, these
symbols were ordained. Others, on the
contrary, with but little less absurdity, be-
cause the virtue of these things doth not
arise merely from themselves, but consisteth
in their relation to something further, have
conceived that they are not to be at all re-
tained: such is the extravagant opinion of
the people among us commonly denomi-
nated Quakers, with the regard to the two
sacraments of the christian church.

We shall, in the case before us, be well
guarded against either of the absurdities I
have now particularized, if we examine
into the nature of the rite of baptism, and
consider what necessity there is for the ob-
servance of it.

SERM. Now for the first enquiry, it is a position
XVII.  which will sufficiently approve itself to every man's understanding, that for men to be received into the favour of God, and become proper objects for His protection and patronage, it is fit, that their minds be cleansed from evil inclinations and wicked dispositions. Of such purification, the external washing with water is an apt and significant symbol. For the body alone being that which we can sensibly reach, and itself partaking in the acts of iniquity and pollutions of sin, and being first the corrupter, and afterwards the instrument through which the depraved soul practises her evil imaginations, nature itself might lead, and perhaps, in many instances, has led men, who have become sensible of the vileness of sensual gratifications, to begin their entrance on a life of purity, with ablution of the body; testifying, by this act, their eagerness to deliver themselves from the uncleanness which they had contracted. Among the Jews, it was customary, when one of another nation became a proselyte to the law

law of Moses, before he was admitted to SERM.
circumcision, by baptism to cleanse him, as XVII.
it were, from the defilement of his former 
idolatry : this usage the great herald of the
Gospel, John, (surnamed from the very
circumstance the Baptist) embraced with
respect to the Jews themselves, reminding
them of their guilt, and exhorting them to
repent, and be baptized ; and it was at
length solemnly ordained, by our blessed
Lord, to be the mean of admission into the
new covenant of which He is the Medi-
atour.

If baptism, then, be but considered
merely as significant of purification from
past pollutions, no one can properly come
to it who is not sincerely desirous of being
cleansed from such : and those who main-
tain not the purity thus obtained, but return
again to the practice of vice, forgetting that
they were purged from their old sins, render
it useless and nugatory. For the baptism
which “ doth now save us, is not (as St.
Peter declares) the putting away the filth

SERM. of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.”

If viewed farther, as ordained by Christ to be the rite by which all who are persuaded of the truth of His religion shall be received into the covenant made between God and man, through His mediation; thus connected its efficacy, and all the benefits to be derived from it, must depend on the terms of that covenant, and the manner in which the person baptized performs the conditions which are required of him: and thus error on that side, on which the observance of the externals of religion is substituted for the whole practice of it, is, in this case, excluded. While the necessity of the thing itself, and the presumptuous absurdity of neglecting it, is made sufficiently apparent by the mention of its being commanded by our Lord Himself. The being born of Water, is as expressly insisted on in the text, as the being born of the Spirit: and however attached men may be to their
own

own reasonings, and to the ends and purposes discernible through them, when God appoints, it is clearly theirs to obey without hesitation or reply. Neither have those, who will not make themselves partakers of the covenant in the manner He hath been pleased to prescribe, any ground of complaint, if they be excluded from the benefits of it. In the covenant of circumcision it was said, "The uncircumcised man-child shall be cut off from his people: he hath broken my covenant." In the covenant of baptism it is said, "Verily, Verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of Water, and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." Let those, then, who neglect the last, consider, as earnestly as the importance of obtaining an inheritance into the kingdom of heaven demands, Where is the difference between these denunciations?

SERM.
XVII.
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How necessary the apostles thought the compliance with that part of their Lord's instructions, which directed them to baptize as well as to teach, we may learn from

SERM. their constant practice, and especially from  
·XVII. the very strong instance afforded us by St.  
Peter's conduct with respect to the Centu-  
rion Cornelius, and his household, when,  
even after the Holy Ghost had fallen on  
them, he first signified, that there was  
something yet undone, when he asked,  
"Can any man forbid water, that these  
should not be baptized, which have received  
the Holy Ghost as well as we?" (Acts x.  
47.) And then commanded them to be  
baptized in the name of the Lord; thereby  
manifesting, that he esteemed this to be the  
full and solemn reception of them into the  
church of God, and into the number of  
that people to whom belong all the promises  
of salvation sent from the Father by the  
Son, and the inheritance of which is made  
sure by the operation of the Holy Ghost.  
The same, then, ought we to think of this  
holy baptism; and reflecting, that men  
were, from the first, called to it, as to the  
baptism of repentance for remission of sins  
to all that believe, hold our coming unto  
it to be the most solemn assurance we can  
give



give of our unfeigned sense and repentance of our sins past, the strongest profession we can make of our faith in those sacred Three, in whose names we are baptized, and the most avowed engagement of ourselves, to live that holy life commanded in the Gospel, into the fellowship of which we are hereby associated.

And, indeed, on ground similar to this, we find St. Paul repeatedly urging his converts to the exercise of all the christian virtues. Thus, in his epistle to the Romans :  
“ How shall we who are dead unto sin, live any longer therein ? Know ye not, that so many as were baptized into Jesus Christ, were baptized into His death ? Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death, that like as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.”  
In which words ye may observe, the apostle makes an allusion to the manner in which baptism was originally administered, which was by immersing, and thus burying, as it were,

SERM. were, the whole body in water; from  
XVII. whence it arose again washed, and meet to  
enter on a new life of holy conversation. Difference of climate, and the tender age of those now brought to the sacred font, have made relaxation in this particular necessary, whence to those who do not look back to the ancient mode, the strength and justice of this allusion of the apostle is not so apparent.

But if we should be here asked, What are the reasons for admitting infants to baptism, when they neither have any actual sins to repent of, nor can be sensible of the need in which, from the corruption of their nature, they stand of the divine mercy and assistance, nor can understand the terms required? We have to answer, That from the institution itself of the covenant of circumcision, it is manifest, that infancy was no bar to the admission to all the benefits of that: we have no reason to doubt, then, but as under the law, a strict, so under the Gospel, a milder dispensation, we may, in  
the

the earliest childhood, be received among SERM.  
those to whom God hath promised His XVII.  
especial patronage: and although we read  
not expressly in any of the apostolick  
writings, that the first preachers of the  
Gospel baptized infants, yet we often read  
that they baptized whole families, in which,  
as Christ had before said, "Suffer little  
children, and forbid them not to come unto  
me," we may presume, such were included.

The curse once pronounced on Adam,  
occasioned all his seed to be born in a state  
of reprobation; and, although the redemp-  
tion by Christ has, from the beginning of  
the world, extended to all in every age, and  
there could be no sign of God's giving, or  
man's accepting this redemption, until it  
was made manifest, now it is so, and a sign  
of it has been instituted in the rite of bap-  
tism, to bring our children to be sealed  
among those who are justified through  
Christ, is, surely, a work not to be con-  
demned. By this, like the parents of Sa-  
muel, we introduce our children into the  
temple,



SERM. temple, and offer them to the service of  
XVII. God: by this we place them among those  
who, if they afterwards sin, have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: and although they can neither confess the faith, nor promise to keep it, yet being brought to baptism by such as are already believers, and who undertake to instruct them in what they are to believe, and what they are to practise, as soon as they shall be capable of learning, they are received under the consideration, that when arrived at a riper age, they will take upon themselves the obligations into which their sureties entered for them, and renew, with their own mouths, the confession of that faith in which others have engaged to see that they are brought up.

On these grounds is the baptismal office of our own church formed; and it is required by it, that for every child, two persons of its own sex, and one of the other, become sureties: of these, a promise of an holy life, and an acknowledgement of the  
christian

christian faith in its name, are demanded; **SERM.**  
prayers are offered unto God, that He will **XVII.**  
vouchsafe to counteract, by the operation of  
His blessed Spirit, those evil and corrupt  
affections which, from the depraved state  
of human nature, spring up very early in  
our minds, and that He will, through life,  
so assist, direct, and govern the child now  
presented before Him, that it may, at length,  
attain to an inheritance in the kingdom of  
Heaven. The child is baptized in the form  
commanded by our Lord, and solemnly re-  
ceived as a member of the church; and his  
sureties are exhorted to remember what they  
have undertaken, and perform it, by seeing  
that the child be virtuously brought up to  
lead a godly and a christian life, and in-  
structed in the principles and precepts of  
the Gospel, and, when old enough, to be  
made sensible of what has been, in its in-  
fancy, promised for it, called to take on it-  
self the vows made in its name, and re-  
ceiving confirmation at the hands of the  
bishop, declare his own acceptance of God's  
merciful offer of salvation.

In

SERM.

XVII.

In thus repeating merely what every one may read in his Common Prayer Book, I am not unnecessarily employing that time which might be applied to speaking on subjects not so apposite to all: for although much pains have been taken to make the proper manner of performing and attending every office of our church clear to all concerned, by the plainest directions inserted throughout their forms, ye must be sensible, that these directions are in general either not read, or not obeyed; and as it is the earnest wish of my heart to impress on your minds every duty to which ye may be called, I have, by the foregoing deduction, sought occasion to recommend to your serious recollection the following truths: 1st. That that of a surety for a child in baptism being a sacred and very important office, it highly behoveth the parents to invite none to it, who are not of an age sufficiently considerate to be duly sensible of the charge which they take on themselves, or of principles and a disposition to discharge it with integrity; and that when they have found such, they do not impede



impede them in performing the promise SERM.  
they have made, to see that the child be XVII.  
virtuously and religiously brought up: For  
is it not highly absurd, first to request men  
to enter into an engagement, and then to  
oppose their fulfilling it? 2dly. That when  
called to take this office on you, ye consider  
the meaning and importance of it, and not  
assume it, unless ye be resolved with sin-  
cerity to perform it. It is now too generally  
viewed in the false light of merely accom-  
modating a friend with one's name, and the  
ceremonial over, is scarcely thought of  
more, not even when the parents die during  
the child's infancy, in which case the obli-  
gation into which the sponsors have so so-  
lemnly entered with the church, and con-  
sequently with Him Who is the Head of  
the church, our Lord Jesus Christ, is in-  
cumbent on them in its fullest force. And  
that, lastly, when appearing at the font to  
be admitted into the christian covenant in  
a child's name, ye should recollect, that the  
questions put to you, concerning the faith  
ye hold, and the vows ye make, are not  
repeated

**SERM.** repeated for form's sake only, and to be answered with a nod or a bow, but by express declaration and word of mouth; it being essentially necessary, that sin be renounced, and Christ acknowledged, before this sacrament be administered.

**XVII.**  
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There is yet, in the administration of this sacrament, one particular, which, although no part of the original institution, was very early adopted, that of giving a new name to the person baptized.

Now if this were done merely in reference and conformity to the usage of taking that of our parents at our natural birth, it would, as baptism is considered, and in its spiritual effects really is a regeneration or new birth, be an highly reasonable and significant custom. But it was, too, a custom in the ancient world, for slaves, when taken into the service of a new master, to receive a new name, which, therefore, became a sign of their new relation. And, indeed, the biblical history proves, that important

portant events taking place in a man's life, SERM.
was often the occasion of imposing on him XVII.
a new name: as when Abram received the
promises, his name was, by the Almighty,
changed to that of Abraham, in testimony
that he should be the father of many people,
as it is this day. From all which, the
purpose and use of a name being given to
us on our admission into the christian cove-
nant, is sufficiently apparent. It is that we
may be provided with a perpetual admoni-
tion to us of the engagements we have con-
tracted, of the service into which we have
entered; with a constant badge of the pro-
fession we have taken on ourselves, "to
follow (as it is expressed in the very words
of our baptismal office) the example of our
Saviour Christ, and to be made like unto
Him, that as He died, and rose again for
us, so should we, who are baptized, die
from sin, and rise again unto righteousness,
continually mortifying all our evil and
corrupt affections, and daily proceeding in
all virtue and godliness of living."

SERM.

XVII.

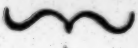
Let this mind, therefore, be in you, that your christian names may henceforth serve as an effectual remembrance, that ye are Christ's, and solemnly engaged to fight manfully under His banner against the world, the flesh, and the devil; as an assurance, which can be weakened only by your own desertion of your engagements; that there is " reserved for you in the Heavens, an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away." Let the greatness of Him to whom this name, as long as ye adhere to His service, is a perpetual sign of your belonging, counteract both the threats and arts of those who would either terrify or seduce you from the faith and practice of His Gospel. And let the glories promised to that assembly, of which ye became members when ye received these names, be kept so present to your minds, by the constant repetition of them, as to carry you so triumphantly through all the suffering, and all the self-denial, which ye may now have to encounter, that ye may contract no pollution on earth that may

render you unfit to be admitted into **SERM.**
Heaven.

XVII.



I observed, in the beginning of this discourse, that the words of the text noticed two parts in the sacrament of baptism, the ritual, (to which I have now spoken) and the spiritual: but what might be said of this last, I have already anticipated, when I addressed you on the operations of the Holy Spirit, and, therefore, shall here add no more, than that it is not to be expected that so great a gift as that of the divine illumination and assistance, should be vouchsafed to any who manifest so little concern for the privileges to which they were, by baptism, admitted, as never to call to mind the vows that were then made for them, or, which is nearly the same thing, never seriously consider, what manner of conversation they are bound, by the engagements then made for them to maintain. In that excellent little compendium of a christian's duty, which the church of England hath had drawn up for the instruction of her

SERM. catechumens, we are reminded, that our
XVII.  godfathers and godmothers promised for
us, "that we should renounce the devil
and all his works; the pomps and vanity
of this wicked world, and all the sinful
lusts of the flesh." Now what meaning
can we suppose is attached to these words,
by either those who breed up their children
in mere lessons of worldly prudence, con-
stantly setting before them the benefits of
gain, and most carefully instructing them
in the means of it; those who introduce
them to scenes of voluptuousness and diffi-
pation, corrupt their minds with images of
worldly grandeur, and advise them to con-
sider the obtaining the power of indulging
in these as their great object in life; or
those who send them for education to semi-
naries, where they are in an almost stated
course led to, and taught, that there is no
crime in those indulgences of carnal lusts,
which the Gospel most positively and re-
peatedly declares, will exclude the guilty
from any inheritance in the kingdom of
God? In what sense can we suppose these
words

words are understood by those who, when SERM.
they come to years of reflection, never con- XVII.
sider their baptismal vow as a rule of con-
duct ; and however enslaving themselves to
avarice, pride, vanity, pleasure, or lust,
appear totally unconscious of living in per-
petual breach of the first and most solemn
engagement into which they ever entered ?
Many, who are guilty of these things, pro-
fess themselves to be disciples of the Gospel,
expect a day of future account, and ac-
knowledge, that their only hope of mercy
then rests in Christ their Saviour. But
when it is considered, that the pleas which
such are wont to urge in defence of their
conduct, are the general practise of the
world, and the opinions of those whom
they call “ acquainted with life,” may it
not be feared, that these will be answered,
as the Lord formerly replied to a generation
whose righteousness consisted, too, only in
professions, “ This people draweth nigh
unto me with their mouth, and honoureth
me with their lips ; but their heart is far
from me. But in vain do they worship

SERM. me, teaching for doctrines the command-
XVII. ments of men?"

Indeed, if I mistake not, the parts of the earth nearest to ourselves, have, of late, exhibited a most dreadful scene of judicial consequences flowing from those who have taken on themselves the engagements of christians neglecting to perform them: judicial consequences, I mean, in the desolutions of that Holy Spirit, without whose powerful assistance we cannot stand against the wiles of the devil, and without whose blessed influence the washing of the body with water will be of no avail towards purifying the whole man. For to what but a judicial dereliction, and a delivery unto Satan, can be ascribed that fury of irreligion, which would destroy from among men not only every vestige of faith and piety, but those social manners, and all the effects of mutual benevolence, and common exertions, to which religion gives rise. Yet, mark how this curse hath spread in Europe, and infected nearly every country
of

of Christendom, and particularly most of SERM.
those that have continued in the papal XVII.
apostacy !

Had it been a reformation proceeding from reason that was sought, had it been an exertion of wisdom and of virtue, to deliver men from the shackles of superstition, or the bondage of tyranny, it would have proceeded with moderation, and have stopped when superstition and tyranny were driven away. But its progress has been deeply marked by the virulence of inveterate malice; and the eradication of the christian faith, and the destruction of all performance of duty by man to his Creatour, are the avowed objects of its leaders: nay, the overthrow of all social order, the dissolution of every bond by which we are holden together, and made to contribute to each other's preservation or comfort. Subjects are excited against their sovereign, soldiers against their commanders, servants against their masters, children against their parents: and even the common usages which pre-
B b 4 served

SERM. served nations from behaving like savages
XVII. to each other, are sought to be abolished.

~~~~~ The junction of which total wreck of every thing prizeable in human life, with the destruction of the christian faith, prove how closely connected this latter is with the happiness of man. While the eager pursuit of objects, an attachment to which is no more natural to man than the love of murder, or of any other crime at which our hearts most generally revolt, as plainly indicates, that the wretches thus employed are led by a spirit worse than human, as the goodness and righteous conduct of the earliest christians manifested, that they were guided by One better than human.

Behold, then, the alternative set before yourselves ! Ye are already engaged in covenant with God and Christ : if ye do according to the words of this covenant, your's is the promise of the Spirit to help your infirmities, to guide you through the temptations, and to support you under the difficulties of life ; your's the assurance of  
an

an everlasting rest, where, to the natural SERM.  
triumph of conquerours, will be added the XVII.  
glory of being approved by the Sovereign  
of the universe, the unspeakable gratifica-  
tion of hearing, before men and angels,  
from the throne of perfection, a solemn  
sentence of approbation pronounced on your  
conduct, "Well done, thou good and faith-  
ful servant," followed, too, by the award  
of a recompence, worthy of Him who will  
give it, "Enter thou into the joy of thy  
Lord;" words which mark the happiness  
of those, to whom they will be addressed,  
more strongly than any description which  
could be used: Since what can so well  
express supreme happiness as the mention  
of that in which God His self for ever  
dwells? Such, then, if ye behave faith-  
fully as servants, and if ye serve with firm-  
ness, as soldiers of Christ, is the portion  
that awaits you. But, in proportion as the  
reward thus offered you is great, as the love  
and mercy proffered you are abundant, if ye  
continue in the faith; heavy, on the other  
hand, is the penalty on your breach of  
covenant,

SERM. COVENANT, if, now ye have been “enlight-  
xvii. ened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift,  
and have been partakers of the Holy Ghost,  
and have tasted of the good word of God,  
and of the powers of the world to come,  
ye fall away:” for the despite ye thus do to  
the Spirit of Grace, He will forsake you;  
and being then left unassisted, to wrestle  
not only against the world and the flesh, but  
against the wiles of the devil; What, after  
ye have thus crucified to yourselves the Son  
of God afresh, and put him to open shame,  
shall secure you from proceeding, as myriads  
have lately done, to tread Him under foot,  
and count the blood of the covenant, where-  
with ye have been sanctified, an unholy  
thing? But if ye be thus reprobate and apos-  
tate, there remaineth no more sacrifice for  
sin, but a certain fearful looking-for of  
judgment, and fiery indignation, which  
shall devour the adversaries: all their dread  
forebodings of which will come far short  
of what they will suffer, when, being de-  
nied before His Father, which is in Heaven,  
by Him whom they denied on earth, they  
receive



receive from His mouth the indignant ~~sen-~~ SERM.  
tence, " Depart from me, ye cursed, into XVII.  
everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and  
his angels ;" and find it followed by banish-  
ment to the worm which never dieth, and  
to the fire which never goeth out.

This, then, is the alternative which awaits your choice ; but awaits it in such a manner, that if ye decide not for the better part, the worse will necessarily be assigned unto you ; and that name, which was given you at baptism, and which might have been for your honour, your glory, and your salvation, will be to you for a reproach and everlasting astonishment ; since, although heaven and earth pass away, the word of the Lord shall not pass away. " Verily, Verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of Water, *and of the Spirit*, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."



## SERMON XVIII.

ON THE CONDUCT CONSISTENT WITH OUR  
FAITH.

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COL. III. I.

*If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.*

SO palpable is the absurdity of a man's **SERM.**  
acting inconsistently with the situation **XVIII.**  
in which he is placed, or the character he  
professes, that in the reproof of such con-  
duct, there almost naturally intermingles  
itself a portion of contempt. To a sense  
of the justice of this, rather than to the  
mere ill-nature of mankind in being pleased  
at seeing others reduced below their own  
level, I would ascribe the favourable recep-  
tion,



SERM. tion, which the works of satyrists have met  
 xviii. with in all ages; and, to the same, must  
 be attributed those instances of satirical rebuke with which we meet in the sacred writings; as that fine piece of irony of the prophet Elijah on the priests of Baal, (1 Kings xviii. 27.); and Isaiah's description of the brutish stupidity of the makers and worshippers of idols. (Is. xliv. 13.)

Indeed, these applications to the feeling of shame, will sometimes take effect, when all other arguments fail; and men, too proud to accept instruction, or too obstinate to yield to exhortation, are unable to withstand the poignancy of a reproof, which places them in a despicable light. It is, therefore, no matter of surprize, that in the writings of so great a master of reasoning as St. Paul, we should find frequent use of this appeal to the common feelings of the human mind: as in his censure on the heathen sophists, in his epistle to the Romans, who, he says, "professing themselves to be wise, they became fools." And  
 in

in his reproof to the Galatians, for seeking SERM.  
to be justified by the works of the law, XVIII.  
when they had Christ for their hope; 

“Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?”

Neither are the words of the text entirely free from a mixture of the same species of rebuke: “If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.”

For does he not herein say, “If ye are, indeed, awaked from that death of sin, in which ye formerly lay; if ye are now alive to the hopes of another world, to the prospect of future glory and happiness, under the patronage of Him Who has ascended into Heaven to prepare a place for His disciples, let your conduct prove your faith, and exhibit not the disgraceful spectacle of entering on an arduous pursuit, and permitting your attention to be diverted from it, and your exertions in it abated by occurrences, which, in comparison with the prize at which ye should be aiming, are, beyond expression, trifling?”

Happy

SERM. Happy are the few who are not partakers  
XVIII. with the Colossians in meriting this reproof.

~~~~~ The few, I say, because how is the behaviour of the generality of us consistent with the hopes to which, as christians, we pretend, or with the prospects which the Gospel holds out to all who are truly such? How do we prepare ourselves for entrance into a state of righteousness? How fit ourselves for admission into the society of the blessed and holy?

Very excellent things are spoken of that kingdom: out of it, we are told, shall be gathered all things that offend, and they which do iniquity. It is to be the residence of purity, piety, peace, and charity; and accordingly, as they have proved themselves faithful here, shall the servants of the Lord be rewarded there.

Such is the kingdom of which we boast ourselves to be the inheritors! And hence might not any one, ignorant of the fact, naturally suppose, that as candidates for
such

such an inheritance, we now earnestly cultivated those virtues, the exercise of which, we know, will there be necessary? Might it not be presumed, that our time was employed in gaining habits suitable to the state after which we aspire? Or would it be expecting too much from beings, under these circumstances, to think that their hearts were firmly fixed on a life, in which alone they know true happiness is to be found, that they looked with jealousy upon every thing that might defeat their claim to it; avoided, with abhorrence, every defilement which would prevent their admission into it, and were constantly striving so to rectify their dispositions, and to make themselves such characters, as should be meet to be partakers of this inheritance of the saints in light? Would it be requiring too much of them, to expect that they should consider themselves in this world as only on a journey; and, consequently, pay the things of it no more than a transitory regard? Or, that ruled by these principles of action, they should teach their children

SERM.

XVIII.

SERM. the same, be anxious, above all things, to
XVIII. preserve them from corruption, and deem
no advantages of education fit to be put in
the balance against the loss of innocence and
purity?

Such conduct, it must be acknowledged, might be expected from beings having these prospects, and sensible of their situation; especially if they knew, as we do, that the time of their probation for the future state of happiness, is both limited and very uncertain. But how far these expectations might be answered, or disappointed, on a particular examination of the life and conversation of each of us, is best known to every individual for himself. I stand not here to accuse, but to admonish you, that the kingdom of God consisteth not in words; but in holiness, in righteousness, and in peace; and to remind you, that the heralds of this kingdom have been most explicit in their declarations of what characters shall not be suffered to enter therein.

That

That something is more requisite than SERM.
the merely not being very vicious, we are XVIII.
instructed by St. Paul, in his epistle to the
Hebrews, where he tells us, that “ without holiness no man shall see the Lord.”
For as holiness consists specifically in a
separation from defilement, and our blessed
Saviour hath informed us, that the things
which defile a man, are “ evil thoughts,
adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts,
covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lascivious-
ness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolish-
ness;” if there be meaning in words, un-
less we cleanse ourselves from all these,
we can have no inheritance in the kingdom
of God.

That men, desirous of retaining their pre-
sent indulgences, yet unwilling to relin-
quish their future hopes, would wish to
explain away these doctrines of holiness,
was foreseen; and therefore the same apostle,
after enumerating to the Ephesians nearly
the same list of vices, adds, “ Let no man
deceive you with vain words : for because

SERM. of these things cometh the wrath of God
 XVIII. upon the children of disobedience.”

Nay, without recurring to the infallibility of the divine word, or the express will of God, reflection itself will evince, that these things must be so. Put the case of a man whose evil habits are not subdued, from whose breast all vicious inclinations are not eradicated; suppose such a man placed in a state of the utmost prosperity and ease; where no dread of change, no fear of suffering hung over him, what would be the natural consequence of such freedom from a restraint on a mind not yet purified from evil, not yet habituated to holiness? Would it not be the further growth of evil propensities, and a confirmation of his bad habits? If ye imagine, that awe of the pure and venerable characters with which he would be surrounded, would, in another state, repress the evil tendencies of such a man, till gradually growing weaker and weaker, they at length became quite extinct—Ye still suppose *re-*
straint,

strait, which is incompatible with perfect SERM.
happiness; and ye forget, too, that if one XVIII.
man of this imperfect state of soul, be admitted into that kingdom, on the same ground many must, when they would serve as companions and for encouragement one to another. If ye think, that in that state there can be no temptations of evil, nothing that would prompt a man to offend, Do ye not overlook the fact? That there will be difference of degrees, we know; for we read of one's being appointed to rule over ten cities, and another over five, here then is room for envy; and if that be once introduced, What evil work might not follow?

But God, ye conceive, will provide that no such "consequences shall be produced." True; But how? not, we may be sure, by restraining or correcting those who are about to give birth to them, for thus would pain be introduced, and of that, we are told, there shall be no more; nor yet by the removal of those who are inclined to disturb

SERM. the general tranquillity, for this would be
 XVIII. again to bring in death. No, ye would
 say, but by making every spirit therein
 perfect. Certainly, and so He will; but
 the spirits of whom? of those who have
 endeavoured themselves to become so! or of
 those who would impose on His mercy, by
 continuing in sin until the last moment they
 think they may venture, that grace may
 abound? They are the spirits of just men,
 which we read shall be made perfect; and
 who will be esteemed as such, St. John has
 taught us, in saying, "He that *doeth*
 righteousness is righteous." So that as by
 the doctrine of the Gospel, there is no en-
 trance into the kingdom of Christ but for
 those who are redeemed from all iniquity,
 and purified unto Him: reflection on the
 nature of man, testifies that perfect happi-
 ness cannot exist in any society into which
 those who are not thus purified are admitted.

And thus may we correct those vague
 ideas of the salvation ready to be revealed,
 under which christians form to themselves
 such

such hopes as only prevent them from SERM.
earnestly endeavouring to make themselves XVIII.
the choice characters, which alone can par-
take in it. For it consisteth not in the pro-
miscuous dole of reward, nor in an unin-
telligible exaltation to happiness; but, as
your Lord has told you, that “the king-
dom of God is within you,” it must begin
in ourselves, by repentance and amendment;
and to these, though in themselves abso-
lutely necessary to our happiness, and though
He might have most justly insisted on them
by His rightful authority over us, merely
on the penalty of destruction, our Creatour
hath, of His infinite mercy, affixed the re-
compence of everlasting life; offering,
through His own Son, to every man who
will accept it, spiritual assistance to break
off his evil habits, and acquire these good
ones, which he may exercise in that life for
ever and ever, surrounded with the blessings
which the divine goodness will shower down
on those who are approved.

SERM.

XVIII.

It is to prevent your losing this gift, by depending on the sinful christian's broken reed, a death-bed repentance, that ye are called on, while ye are yet in health and vigour to turn unto the Lord, and set your affection on things above; that ye are exhorted, while ye have something to renounce, to prove that the love of God prevails in your hearts more than the love of the world, by seeking those things which belong unto His kingdom. What these are, in part, I have already reminded you, by shewing the necessity of our qualifying ourselves to be members of that glorious assembly, by striving to obtain dispositions and habits as unaffectedly pure, as sincerely good, as truly amiable as must be possessed by those with whom we would wish for ever to consort: and for the rest, though indeed the heart of man be unable to conceive them all, yet is such a portion of them revealed, that if the information were properly attended to, and men were to make it oftener the subject of their thoughts, the prospect of
future

future happiness thus disclosed to them, **SERM.**
could scarcely fail of producing the effect **XVIII.**
the apostle seems to have expected from
christians recollecting their real situation,
that of making them ashamed of letting
any thing this world can yield, impede their
pursuit of what is thus offered them in the
next.

Nor need our views of these things be
either presumptuous or fanciful; not the
first, because the particulars which the
Scriptures set before us would not have been
mentioned, if it were not intended we should
contemplate them with our freest will and
utmost power; not the other, because they
are sufficiently ample to employ all the
thought we can bestow on them. We have
only to take the declarations of the sacred
writings for our guide, and we shall descry
such a picture of that state, as will, if our
taste can yet discern real happiness, excite
us with fervour to labour for this high
prize of our calling in Jesus Christ our
Lord.

We

SERM. We have frequently to lament in this
XVIII. life, not only the obstinate perverseness
which ruffles the tempers, and defeats the
designs of those who are embarked in a
good course, but the mischievous folly of
fools, which delights in introducing the in-
nocent to the walks of sin, and drawing
those who have made resolutions of righte-
ousness to a breach of them. To those
who have suffered from such companions,
(and there are many who have most severely)
the first particular we have been made ac-
quainted with of the kingdom of Christ,
that out of it shall be taken all things that
cause to offend, will appear to promise con-
solation of no small moment, in their being
hidden, by the presence of God, from the
provoking of men, and the gathering toge-
ther of the froward. Neither will the
second, "that from it shall be driven all
that do iniquity," insure less relief to others
who are now perpetually suffering from the
various crimes of those by whom they are
surrounded. When the fury of the oppres-
sor shall cease, the evil tongue shall be put
to

to silence, and the robber be destroyed from
among the people.

SERM.

XVIII.



Nor while the moral evil of the present world, thus tends to the perpetual vexation of its members, are those afflictions trifling which flow from what we most especially call the natural. Tempests and earthquakes, droughts and inundations, seasons of sickness, and times of scarcity, even without amounting to pestilence and famine, make cruel inroads on human comfort. The promised security from these, therefore, in that land where we are assured, "there shall be no more curse," is another particular within our own comprehension, productive of substantial comfort.

And now, putting these particulars together, consider with yourselves, whether the several points of relief I have already enumerated, would not actually make the present world a very desirable scene; that is, take away sickness, scarcity, strife, calumny, oppression, robbery, and unfair deal-

SERM. ing of every kind, together with the per-
XVIII.  verseness of fools, and the seduction of the
vicious, and what would there yet be to
cause us to complain of this world? Weigh
what ye have suffered, and do yet suffer,
from the evils I have mentioned, with per-
fect freedom from them, and full security
against them, and say whether, if ye pos-
sessed these last, ye should want aught to
complete your happiness but the certainty
of continuing to enjoy them? If not, behold
that certainty reserved for you in the life to
come, since that will be everlasting. It is
the observation of St. Paul, that the fear of
death makes us subject unto bondage all our
life time. And the more ye ponder on this
saying, the more ye will be stricken with
the justice of it. By this fear our very
best enjoyments are interrupted. For the
more pure they may be in themselves, the
more truly worthy of regard, and the sin-
cerer is the delight we receive from them,
the more deplorable is the circumstance,
that the hour is approaching when they
must be left. Conceive, then, this fear taken
away

away ; ye whose hours have ever been im- SERM.
bittered by the thoughts of death advancing XVIII.
to yourselves ; ye who have ever lamented
the ravages among your connections, and
ye who now shudder to think where his
next stroke may fall, estimate, if ye can,
the happiness of being secured from what
is now the source of such perpetual afflic-
tion. And when ye have formed some idea
of it, recollect that ye cannot fail of inher-
iting this, and all the other blessings that
I have, or am yet to mention, but through
your own wilful neglect and obstinate dis-
obedience !

The points I have hitherto noticed, con-
sidered as particulars of relief from the evils
under which we at present groan, may be
termed negative blessings ; but, in addition
to these, the same Scriptures in which they
are promised, hold out also some which are
positive.

Of these stands first that crown of glory,
which all who are chosen shall receive in
the

SERM. the approbation of their God and their
 XVIII. Saviour: for when once these words, "Well
 ~~~~~ done, thou good and faithful servant, enter  
 thou into the joy of the Lord," are pronounced, your characters will be stamped with honour for ever; the consciousness of which will give you, in yourselves, unspeakable rejoicing; while the publick award of applause from a Judge who cannot err, will assure to you the veneration and the love of every individual of that blessed society to which ye have attained.

But of the felicity of being placed in such a society, and of the pursuits and employments to which ye may therein apply, What shall be said? Picture to yourselves whatever enjoyments ye please; as long as they be pure, as long as they be holy, as long as they be worthy the servants of God, and the followers of Christ, and there is no reason to think, but that ye will have full scope for them on the new earth. Whether the conversation of angels delight you, or that of the spirits of just men made perfect,

perfect, or meeting again all ye knew here, **SERM.**  
worth knowing, ye with them trace the **XVIII.**  
wondrous steps by which God hath brought  
you to His rest, discover numberless dangers ye have escaped, and the unthought of mercies ye have received : or whether, with more extensive range of enquiry, ye examine with the enlarged powers ye shall then possess, the admirable works of your Creatour, and the still more admirable judgments of His mouth ; or contemplating, with delight, the scene of interminable happiness, with which ye will then be surrounded, draw an encrease of enjoyment from the unmixed felicity ye see others possessing ; or whether, with sublimer mind, raising your attention from the creation to the Creatour Himself, ye have, through Jesus, the Mediatour of the new covenant, the Father fully revealed unto you, see God as He is, and know, even as ye are known.

Such then being the prospects, which, by the covenant of baptism, are made your own ; such being the objects in pursuit of which



SERM. which ye have by that engaged; consider  
XVIII. with yourselves, with how much earnest-  
ness the former deserve to be retained; with  
how much sincerity the latter ought to be  
preserved! Most powerful provision hath  
been made that, as long as we keep up even  
the semblance of christians, by appearing  
in the congregations of the church, we  
shall not become unmindful of either the  
one or the other, not only through an esta-  
blished ministry of the word, perpetually  
reminding us of the grounds of our faith,  
and of the rewards waiting those who faint  
not in their course; but by the institution  
of another sacrament, the existence of which  
serves, in a most admirable manner, to hand  
down to all the successive generations of  
christians, an irrefragable testimony of the  
death and resurrection of their Saviour.  
For when was this communion of bread  
and wine introduced into the church? The  
writers, we know, of every preceding age,  
mention it as already practised till the time  
of the apostles themselves; and they de-  
clare, that they received it from that Jesus  
of

of Nazareth, whom they acknowledged for SERM.  
the Son of God, because they had the testi- XVIII.  
mony of their own eyes and hands, that He   
was risen from the dead. It was on the  
authority of the miraculous gifts given them  
from Heaven, that they prevailed with the  
nations to receive the Gospel, and with it  
this distinguishing rite of christianity: had  
not, then, those who first embraced chris-  
tianity, had the evidence which the apostles  
asserted they could give of the truth of their  
testimony, that, I mean, of miracles, they  
would not have received this institution of  
the Supper of the Lord; and had they not  
done so, it could, ~~in no later time.~~ have  
been introduced as always practised in the  
church; because every member, in any age,  
would have known, he never heard of it  
before; so that it remains with us an in-  
controvertible pledge of the death of Christ,  
and of the glory that did follow; and becomes,  
by our participation in it, a testimony, that  
we continue in the doctrine and fellowship  
of the apostles; expecting, with them, that

SERM. the same Jesus, whom they saw ascend into  
XVIII. Heaven, will, in like manner, come again.

With such hopes, then, with such evidence, with such engagements, with such admonitions, What manner of men ought we to be? Put this question to yourselves in private, and, if ye find, what a little reflection will assuredly manifest to you, that there is neither consistency, nor safety, nor common sense, in calling Christ your Lord and Master, without obeying His commandments, and following His example, take up the cross at once, and earnestly seek the things which are above, where He sitteth on the right hand of God; and then, when He, Who is your life, shall appear, ye shall also appear with Him in glory. Which, that we may all do, &c.



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